Faculty of Social Science
Bachelor thesis in sociology

The Gezi Protest:
A study of different processes behind the mass mobilization

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Abstract

Just as snowflakes, mass mobilizations such as demonstrations, protests or riots are unique and have their own characters. In the early summer of 2013, Turkey had one of their largest mass mobilizations in modern history, the Gezi Protest, which was rooted in saving the Gezi Park right next to the Taksim square in Istanbul. It started off as a small occupation gathering of about 50 environmentalists’. The police interfered with the occupation and in a couple of days the occupation turned into a mass mobilization with tens of thousands protesters which occupied both the Gezi Park and the Taksim square for about two weeks.

My purpose with this thesis has been to reveal different processes which characterized the Gezi Protest. As my guides to understand the mechanisms behind larger mobilizations I have used theories and models such as: Neil Smelser’s value-added theory, Bruce W.Tuckman’s group development model and Ted Gurr’s version of relative deprivation theory. The method I used was semi-structured interviews with demonstrators who were active at the Gezi Protest and the majority of the respondents were contacted through snowball sampling. Through my interviews I detected six different processes which characterized the Gezi Protest: the usage of social media as an alternative news source when the mainstream media failed to report the actual events, and also as a tool for organizing events and spread information among the demonstrators; rescuing the Gezi Park was the main agenda behind the mobilization, I did, however, discover other reasons behind the participation at the Gezi Protest; the Gezi Protest had three different types of protesters; there was an absence of a leader or leader group, which effected the organizational part of the mobilization; there were different collaborations and arguments between different groups active at the Gezi Protest; during the Gezi Protest, the resignation of the current government became a second primary target for the demonstrators.

Keywords

The Gezi Protest, collective action, group dynamics, organization, collaboration processes
Acknowledges

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1 Introduction

In all civilizations men have thrown themselves into episodes of dramatic behavior, such as the craze, the riot, and the revolution. Often we react emotionally to these episodes. We stand, for instance, amused by the foibles of the craze, aghast at the cruelties of the riot, and inspired by the fervor of the revolution (Smelser 1965: 1).

This thesis will focus on the Gezi Protest and my motivation behind the selection of this particular case study is partly due to my own personal connection to Turkey. I have both family and friends there and I spend a lot of my time in the country. However, the main reason behind the selection of the Gezi Protest was the fact that this was the first time in over thirty years that such a large group mobilization occurred in Turkey. It started as a small park occupation on a micro level, but grew into a nation-wide mobilization on a macro level in just a few days. Another issue that caught my attention was the overall group gathering within the occupied area, referring to the wide variety of smaller organizations, groups, activist movements and political parties that participated side-by-side.

1.1 Background

On the 27th of May, 2013, a small group of ca 50 environmental activists, primarily from the Taksim Solidarity platform, gathered in the Gezi Park in an attempt to stop the ongoing demolition of the park that had started in the earlier period. The environmentalists brought their own tents, sleeping-bags, blankets etc. and spent the night at the park (Sabah, 2013, 29th of May). Early in the morning, on the second day of the occupation, police intervened with the environmentalists’ occupation of the park and tried to disperse them by using teargas (Perrussel-Morin, 2013, 29th of May). After the disperse attempt the support for the environmentalists’ occupation grew and more people started to join their cause, even politicians and celebrities. By the 29th of May there were around 500 people who occupied the park, ten times more than two days before (Hürriyet 2013). The support and the participation in occupying the park continued to grow the following days and the police interference continued along with the growth. The third police intervention was on the 31st of May and this time they used both teargas and water cannons which resulted in over a hundred injured people. After
this disperse attempt over 10 000 protesters gathered in the streets of Istanbul (New York Post, 2013, 31st of May).

After the third police attack on the 31st of May, the large amount of new participants occupied Taksim square and they kept the police away by building barricades. The police responded to the demonstrators with teargas, water cannons and rubber bullets for two weeks during their attacks to disperse the protesters from the occupied areas. Among the participants in the demonstration there was a large variety of different groups, organizations, political parties and movements - feminists, LGBT activists, anarchists, environmentalists, football hooligans, anti-capitalistic Muslims, secular, socialists, Marxists, Kemalists, nationalists, Alevi and Kurds (Gavin-Marshall 2013). According to the BBC reporter Mark Lowen, the occupied area had similar features with a carnival since the occupiers arranged music concerts, food stands, discussion forums, poetry reading, a library and a café (Lowen, 2013, 5th of June). The occupation of Taksim square ended after the 11th of June when the police made another attempt to disperse the demonstrators from the occupied area (Sayfa, 2013, 13th of June). The demonstrators and occupiers withdrew to the Gezi Park and four days later the police made one final attempt in dispersing the occupiers from the park and finally succeeded. The occupation was now officially over (Reynolds, 2013, 16th of June).

According to de Bellaigue, the total amount of participants within the Gezi movement were around three and a half million nationwide, which included occupiers, demonstrators, protesters and supporters in Turkey (de Bellaigue, 2013, 19th of December). The end result of the demonstration that took place in Taksim area was a saved Gezi Park to the cost of five deaths, over 8 000 injuries and hundreds of police arrests (Amnesty International 2013)

1.2 Case of a case

When I went to Turkey for the interviews, my original thesis plan was to investigate people’s participation in a mobilization as nonviolent protestors when the police used excessive use of violence as a method for dispersing the protestors and the theoretical framework for the thesis and my research problem was going to be conducted through a rational choice perspective. Since I wanted to get an overall picture over the situation, my questions were wide and took in a lot of different areas and aspects over the Gezi
Protest. However, as the interviews went on I discovered other interesting angles based on what the respondents talked about in relation to the whole movement and its different processes, from the beginning to the end. The Gezi Protest was an interesting case itself. The thesis started out from a deductive approach with a focus on the rational choice theory and turned into a more inductive research project. Arthur L. Stinchcombe describes this phenomenon in his book *The logic of social research* as a case which turn into another case (Stinchcombe 2005:159).

1.3 Earlier research

Since the Gezi Protest was a fairly new mass mobilization in Turkey and still ongoing in a way, referring to the spontaneous ongoing gathering of demonstrators in different squares around Turkey’s cities, it has been difficult to find earlier academic research on this particular movement. By using a selection of essays from *Keele European Research Center I* will try to summarize what have been written so far about the Gezi Protest in terms of its processes which is a part of its character.

Marco Giugni underlines that no social movement is exactly the same as another one and that earlier researchers have tried to understand social movements by generalizing them and apply invariant models of collective action, which is doomed to fail according to Giugni (Giugni 1999. xxi). In the case of the Gezi Protest, there have been attempts by journalists and scholars to compare the mass mobilization with other social movements, e.g. the Arabic spring movements and the occupy movements (Xypolia 2013: 33).

However, Ilia Xypolia dismisses these comparisons with the statement that these other social movements erupted from economic inequality factors (ibid). Xypolia do, however, underline the similarities and common features between the Gezi Protest and the student uprising in Mexico 1968, which is related to economic factors, yet in an opposite way since both countries had an uprising in their overall economic performances. Since 2002, the AKP (Justice and Development Party), with their leader and Prime Minister (P.M.) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, have been running the Turkish government. The AKP adopted new structural reforms which have resulted in macroeconomic stabilization and a continued growth of their GDP, which have improved the overall living standards among the people in Turkey and the wider growth
of middle class families (Xypolia 2013: 35-6). HDI statistics from UNDP verify these statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
<th>Expected years of schooling</th>
<th>Mean years of schooling</th>
<th>GNI per capita (2005 PPPs)</th>
<th>HDI value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5,872</td>
<td>0.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6,583</td>
<td>0.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7,960</td>
<td>0.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8,539</td>
<td>0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9,675</td>
<td>0.645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>11,320</td>
<td>0.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>12,440</td>
<td>0.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>13,344</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>13,710</td>
<td>0.722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(UNDP 2013).

The HDI statistics clearly shows that the general development in Turkey since AKP came to power is moving forward. Mexico followed a similar development during the 1960s. However, both Bülent Gökay and Farzana Shain underline the unequal division of these improvements in Turkey since the economic and overall development mainly have benefited the middle class, upper middle class and the new bourgeoisie, while the working class has been neglected (Gökay & Shain 2013: 59).

Even if both Mexico and Turkey had moved forward in terms of economic development during the mass mobilizations, there was still a social inequality since both governments used an authoritarian and more oppressive approach towards their population (Xypolia 2013: 36). Turkey’s government has restricted the freedom of speech by using wider control of the media and by imprisoning journalists who are critical towards the government (ibid). Xypolia underlines how the AKP intrudes more on the private sphere of the Turkish citizens, trying to control people through different restrictions, which was a tactic the Mexican government also used (Xypolia 2013: 37). The contradictory part about this authoritarian style of ruling by the AKP is that in the early elections in 2002, the AKP was considered to be a new start for Turkish democratization and liberty processes since Turkey has an authoritarian history of the old Kemalist ruling and its military, according to Nikos Christofis (Christofis 2013: 49).

Other features which both the Mexican and Turkish movements shared were the spontaneous rise of the movements, the large crowd of educated and middle class participants, the usage of social media, the absence of leaders in charge of the movements and the government’s decision to use police violence as a tool for handling the demonstrators (Xypolia 2013: 37-9).
1.4 Purpose

My purpose with this thesis is to give an overall picture over the different processes which occurred during the Gezi Protest and how these processes shaped the mobilization into its special character.

1.5 Research questions

The main questions for this thesis is: how did the overall protest, demonstration and occupation process look like? What processes characterized the Gezi Protest?

To answer this question we also need to answer some sub questions:

- Was there any other factor except for saving the Gezi Park behind the mass mobilization?
- Was there a common goal?
- Was there an absence of a leader or leading group in charge of the Gezi Protest?
- How did people get organized?
- What did the collaboration process between the different people and groups that participated look like during the time at the Gezi Protest?

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Value-added theory

Neil Smelser’s value-added theory is a basic model for how group mobilization builds up in six different stages. The theories around this model have been useful since they gave me more knowledge about the different processes behind each step. This knowledge has been applied to the interview questions and as an analytical framework of the collected data.

Step one is structural conduciveness and with that Smelser refers to that anything has to happen somewhere and all types of group mobilizations have their own characters (Smelser 1965: 15). If we relate this first step to what we know about the Gezi Protest we could assume that the Gezi Park were the place where the structural conduciveness
could get the chance to emerge since it was the planed demolishing of the park which gathered occupiers to that area.

Step two is structural strain. Strain can be caused by a population’s fear of different deprivations, conflicts or discrepancies, which may lead to events of panic among the people (Smelser 1965: 16). For mobilization to emerge through structural strain there must be an event of conduciveness that weighs up the panic behavior (ibid). The city’s wants to demolish the park so that they could create space for the new building and the occupiers need to save the park from being demolished through occupation seemed to have created an event of unbalance between these two poles.

Step three is growth and spread of a generalized belief. If we have a suitable environment for collective behavior to occur and a strain to back it up, the mobilization still need actors that can participate, actors who have a general belief concerning the source behind the strain (ibid). If only a handful of people believe in a specific strain, there is less chance that a greater mobilization will occur. Smelser presents five different types of beliefs that are crucial factors behind a mobilization: hysterical, wish-fulfillment, hostile, norm-oriented and value-oriented beliefs (ibid). In the case of the Gezi Park, the people who occupied the area were the actors and their general belief was to save the park from being demolished.

The fourth step is precipitating factors. Three crucial steps before the actual mobilization have been presented, but they need an event that lights the spark, something that gives the generalized belief, strain and conduciveness that last push towards a mobilization (Smelser 1965: 17). As more people gathered to support the occupation of the Gezi Park and prevent the demolishing of it, the city answered the occupiers by using police violence as a method to disperse them from the area.

The fifth step is mobilization of participants for action. This is the step that the four previous ones; conduciveness, strain, general beliefs and precipitating factors have created together. This fifth step is the demonstration, riot or revolution attempt and Smelser underline the importance of a leader or a leader figure within the mobilized group (ibid). If we go back to the previous four steps regarding the Gezi Protest, we have patterns that fit in all of them: the location, the occupation, the general belief in
saving the park and the city’s violent response to the occupiers. After the police attempt to disperse the occupiers the actual Gezi Protest started in Istanbul and would soon spread on a nation level.

The sixth and the last step is the *operation of social control* – agents attempt to prevent, interrupt, deflect or inhibit the mobilized groups’ mission or goal (ibid). Smelser presents two different types of social control:

1. The first type of social control is situated before the actual mobilization occurs. The first two steps, conduciveness and strain, are often in focus to be prevented for minimizing the actual risk of a future mobilization.
2. The second type of social control is situated after that the mobilization has occurred. The main responsibilities in this case lay within the agents of the police, politicians, the press, the court, religious leaders, regional leaders etc. – they are the ones that have the main responsibilities to react (or not) towards the ongoing mobilization and take back the control (ibid).

Smelser present two types of scenarios regarding the operation of social control and as I can see it both of them are applicable to the Gezi Protest. The first type of social control was attempted when the police tried to disperse the occupiers from the Gezi Park, which had an opposite effect. The second type of social control was the continued police attempts to disperse the demonstrators from the occupied area.

2.2 Tuckman’s group development model

Giugni argues that social movements are not one large homogeneous group, it is rather a complex formation of different groups, organizations and actions, which all may have different goals they wish to achieve (Giugni 1999: xx). The majority of the news sources I have been studying confirm this pattern since they underline the many different groups from society’s all corners that were involved, and how they collaborated during the protests. Two important factors relevant to the analysis of this kind of gathering of individuals or groups, are cohesion and the collaboration process. I have used Bruce W. Tuckman’s group development model in this study in order to broaden my knowledge of this field and to give my interview questions some background. Similar to the value-added theory, Tuckman’s group development model is
also based upon different steps, forming-storming-norming-performing, and these steps occur after the group has been created.

Step one is *forming* – which refers to the actual forming of the group and the early processes where group members get familiar with each other for the first time and where they discuss how they together will approach the common task the group is aiming for, even if individual opinions are largely in focus (Tuckman 1965: 388). In this stage some members may also test the leader or other members in the group according to which behavior that is acceptable and how the leader and other members approach this behavior (Tuckman 1965: 386).

Step two is *storming* – which refers to the stage where conflicts between group members or its leader start to arise. The main factor is the lack of unity between the group members (ibid). The common task is now affected because there is unwillingness among certain members to put in their share of personal participation in the plan to achieving the task by using stronger expression of emotions as a form of reaction and defense mechanism (ibid). These conflicts are in some way necessary for the group if they want to create higher tolerance between its members.

Step three is *norming* – which is the step where the group cohesion is in focus. After the more conflicted second step, the members of the group now accept each other and they are now step closer towards full unity. The members of the group now exchange opinions and discuss how they best can collaborate together for achieving the task, which means that some members may have to put their own ideas and thoughts at the side for the common good (Tuckman 1965: 387).

Step four is *performing* – the unity that was established in the previous phase now works as a problem-solving mechanism among the group’s members, which are now focused on the task mission. The unity and the established kinship now gives the members of the group certain roles which they will play in the mission to succeed with the task, without conflicts or arguments (ibid).
2.3 Relative deprivation

Relative deprivation (RD) is a theory which focuses on how people may react under the pressure of deprivation. Since the earlier research shows a pattern of economic stability and overall development in Turkey, yet an authoritarian government who intrudes on the private sphere of its citizens, there may be a case of deprivation. Ted Robert Gurr’s version of the theory has worked as a source of information during the analyzing process and a guide in the creation of relevant questions regarding relative deprivation.

Gurr proclaim that the largest force behind violent and nonviolent group mobilizations is frustration and aggression, and that another force is the expectations to achieve something after the mobilization (Gurr 2011: 36-37). Even if a certain society prioritize a certain dimension over another – e.g. that there is a working social welfare program, yet the freedom of speech is limited – people will try to find a way to create balance between both dimensions, e.g. participate in a mobilization towards the common goal (Gurr 2011: 40).

Gurr has formulated three different theoretical models regarding relative deprivation, with a view how frustration and aggression develops into group mobilization. These models could be used as tools as a way to understand the events that takes place during a mobilization. The model that I will focus on is the progressive deprivation model- where the expectations on a society’s development are high, while the capacity to achieve it goes down (Gurr 2011: 52).

2.4 How do the theories work together

Smelser’s value-added theory treats the early processes before the mobilization occurs and Tuckman’s group development model elaborate with the processes during the mobilization. Gurr’s version of RD acknowledges potential frustrations that could have worked as triggering factors behind the whole Gezi Protest. Smelser’s and Tuckman’s theories are tools to understand how different processes took place during the formation stage, while Gurr’s theory is used as a tool for understanding the mass mobilization from the 50 environmentalists to the three and a half million people that were engaged in way or another in the Gezi Protest. By using these three different theories in correlation I am adopting an approach known as triangulation (Mikkelsen 2005: 96).
Thus by using triangulation and combining the three theories together and see the research problem from more than one perspective, I hope that it will give the ending results more variation and validation.

3 Method

3.1 Interviews

This study is based on a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews as the data collection base. The questions are based on some of the hypotheses I have, the research questions, issues that I found interesting and the theoretical approach I have adopted. One hypothesis refers to the collaboration process, for I believe that collaboration is necessary for a successful demonstration or protest. If the participants don’t collaborate towards a common goal, the chances are slimmer that the mission will succeed. Another hypothesis is that the Gezi Park was not the main reason behind the massive group mobilization; I believe that other factors were involved.

I adopted a mixture between two different interview techniques: interview guide approach and standardized open-ended interviews (Mikkelsen 2005: 171). The first technique applies the topics and issues which I wanted to cover, and at the same time it kept the questions open and gave an opportunity for follow-up questions. The latter technique is stricter since you use standard questions which all respondents answer, however, the follow-up questions may differ depending on the respondents answers. The motivation behind the usage of these two interview techniques is based on the usage of a pre-constructed question guide with a majority of open questions, which created an opportunity for further interesting questions and themes. And while I used a question guide which applied to all respondents, it was easier to find the general patterns and themes.

The motivation behind the use of interviews as my method for collecting data is based on that the respondents were active at the scene where they acted as protesters themselves and observed, perhaps in their own subjective way, the actual processes behind; the group behavior, the clashes with the police, the violence, the unity, the singing, the screaming, the dancing etc.
However, there may be a risk for bias among the respondents, since it’s their own personal experience that represents the Gezi Protest, and also a large part of them were selected through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is vulnerable to homosocial tendencies in opinions and thoughts that might affect the data, artificially limiting the range of sample diversity.

Even if I used interviews as my method for collecting the data, I do believe that observation of the actual processes behind the Gezi Protest could have contributed a lot to my own understanding of the different processes behind the mass mobilization. By applying observation I would have had the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge about the case which I studied, being able to build up my own knowledge through observation and participation (Fangen 2011: 32). Since I did not get that opportunity I have enriched my knowledge around the Gezi Protest with different news articles, videos, blogs and other internet based information sources around this event that have been available. In an attempt to avoid being colored by propaganda or a specific geographical perspective, I have been trying to keep the sources of information on a multidimensional level with emphasis on different nations and news corporations.

3.2 Sampling

The choice of sampling that the collected data derives from is demonstrators who participated in the Gezi Protest in Istanbul during those three intensive weeks. This was the main criteria the sampling had since I wanted to focus on the Gezi Protest, not the movement that spread through Turkey. Some of the respondents had connections to certain groups that were involved with the demonstration and others were there by themselves. Seventeen interviews were conducted, ten interviews with men and seven interviews with women. As mentioned above, seven of the interviews were conducted through snowball sampling; one respondent knew another who knew another. Four interviews were scheduled with friends. Four interviews came as a bonus when I was supposed to interview respondents that I got in contact with through snowball sampling. One interview was conducted through posting interest notes on the Gezi Protest related Facebook pages. Another interview was conducted when visiting an occupied house.
3.3 Approach to data analysis

I analyzed the data through *thematic analysis*, which is a method that handle the data through six different steps: familiarizing myself with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; producing the report (Braun & Clarke 2006: 86-93). Thematic analysis was a suitable way of handling my data since I used interview as a method and ended up with a lot of data material which need to be handled and analyzed. My guiding tools during the analyzing process was a correlation between the theories, the data material and my own understanding, which Braun and Clarke refer to as a deductive *top down* way in approaching the data (2006: 83). I used thematic analysis with its six steps and the top down approach in terms of finding different patterns within the data, i.e. themes that characterized the Gezi Protest.

3.4 Ethics

According to the ethical code issued by the Swedish Research Counsel I have informed the respondents in the study about their various rights as informants. I informed them about the purpose with my thesis and I also informed that there might be some changes or new things added during the working process (Dalen 2007: 21). I informed them that participation was optional and that they could refrain from answering any question they wanted or quit the interview at any time (Dalen 2007: 22). The informants were also informed about the rule of privacy, that information about them would not be forwarded to anyone else and that their identity could be kept anonymous if they wished (Dalen 2007:23). Only one respondent wanted to go under anonymous identity.

4 Disposition

The reminder of the thesis is structured in four steps.

- The first step is an introduction of the respondents which participated in this study.

- The second step is the introduction and analysis of the six themes which I discovered through the interviews. The first part theme treats social media and
its role in the Gezi Protest. The second theme goes deeper into the different reasons behind people’s decision to join the Gezi Protest. The third theme treats the different types of demonstrators which were active and the roles they adapted to. The fourth theme goes deeper into how different groups interacted between each other during the Gezi Protest. The fifth theme discusses around the absence of a leader and how the Gezi Protest was organized. The sixth and last theme treats the demands and final achievements of the Gezi Protest.

- The third step summarizes all the overall thesis lauout and the six themes.

- The fourth step is an overall discussion about the Gezi Protest, the themes and the situation in Turkey as it looks now almost a year after the mass mobilization.

5 The respondents

I conducted a total of 17 interviews at 10 different occasions in a timespan of seven days. All the interviews were located in Istanbul and they were all made in person. The respondents in this study are:

1. Burak 28, Gözde 29 and Erol 30 – the interview took place in a bar in the area of Kadiköy. I met Burak one year ago through my girlfriend; they were childhood friends. I arranged a meeting with him before I went to Istanbul. The day we were going to meet, another interview opportunity came up with Gözde, also a friend of my girlfriend whom she met through university studies in Sweden. We decided to do both interviews at the same time. Gözde brought a friend of hers, Erol, who wanted to participate. Burak was acquainted with Gözde and Erol. All three of them were partly Kemalists in their beliefs, although none of them belonged to any specific organization, group or political party. Both Burak and Erol were at the Gezi Protest almost every day, while Gözde was there for three days.

2. Hilal 32 – I met Hilal through a Gezi Protest related Facebook page. She was politically involved, although she could not share information about which party. Hilal was born and raised in Germany and has lived in Turkey for two
years. We conducted the interview at a café in Kadıköy. Hilal was at the Gezi Protest almost every day. After the interview, Hilal took me to the first occupied building in Istanbul, Don Quixote, and there I met Cengiz.

3. Cengiz 25 – Cengiz was busy at the time, so we decided to make the interview the next day. When I arrived to Don Quixote next day Cengiz met me up at the entrance room with a big smile on his face and he told me that he had something to show me before we started. We went a little bit further into the room and he grabbed a backpack behind a couch and opened it. Inside the backpack was his “survival” kit during the protests: gasmask, helmet, a couple of thick handyman gloves, a slingshot and some marbles - and he had kept some gas canisters as souvenirs, which the police used. He placed them nicely in a row next to each other on the floor and told me which country each of them was made. Cengiz was the only respondent who didn’t want to participate with his original name. He explained that he was violent during the Gezi Protest and he wanted to keep his identity secret. Later we went up to the second floor of the building and the interview took place in the upcoming library room and one of the bookshelf’s had a row of stuffed up penguins. He told me that he believed in both pacifism and anarchism; he did not however belong to any specific organization, group or political party. Cengiz was at the Gezi Protest every day and he slept close to the barricades.

4. Irem 29 and Barış 26 – I met Irem and Barış one year ago through a good friend in Istanbul. They were also the couple that took me in for one week during my visit in Istanbul. They had a small company together and their business was to import electronic devises from China and sell them in Turkey. Both of them were atheists and animal right supporters, they did not, however, belong to any specific organization, group or political party. The interviews were conducted at their home in Kadıköy. Barış English vocabulary was limited, so Irem assumed the role as translator. Since their company office lies close to the Taksim square and Gezi Park, both Irem and Barış attended the Gezi Protest every day after work.
5. Zeynep 25 – I knew Zeynep since three years back. We both volunteered in the same city, in Romania. I was at a school for children with intellectual disability and Zeynep volunteered as an entertainer for children at hospitals. We have not seen each other since I left Romania. We met in Beşiktaş where the interview was conducted at a bar that Zeynep was familiar with. Zeynep did not belong to any specific organization, group or political party. Zeynep was at the occupied Gezi Park during one of the first days and spent the night there. Later she visited the Gezi Protest for three days during the early stage. Due to her school exams she could not attend more.

6. Barış (2) 25 and Yücel 27 – both of them were friends of Irem and Barış, yet they did not know each other. The interviews took place in a café in Kadıköy, Irem and Barış was also there. I interviewed Barış (2) first and Irem worked as a translator since the former did not speak English. Barış (2) was a socialist, although he did not belong to any specific party. Barış (2) had participated in several demonstrations and after the interview we discussed about worker-rights and he told me about the government’s plan to censure the Internet. Barış (2) was at the Gezi Protest almost every day. After my interview with Barış (2) I interviewed Yücel. His English was good. He did, however, have some problems with explaining and understanding a few words, so Irem helped him out with some translations. Yücel did not belong to any specific organization, group or political party. When the Gezi Protest started, Yücel was on a vacation in Sweden. He and a friend were on a shorter Europa trip. Yücel entered the Gezi Protest during the middle stage.

7. Sezi 32, Caner 26, Ece 28 and Akif 33 – Through Yücel I got in contact with a friend of him, Caner. Caner and the others worked as urban planners and were some of the initiators behind Taksim Solidarity and four of the original fifty people that occupied the park from the first day. I met them all at their office in Beşiktaş together with the same friend that introduced me to Irem and Barış. This interview meeting was at the initially unstructured. I interviewed Sezi first and she used my question form and answered through that. When I found something interesting in her answers I asked follow up questions. Caner was also in the room and he filled in things when he believed that she missed
something. After twenty minutes she had to leave, work was calling. When Sezi left, Ece and Akif entered the room. This time I interviewed Caner, Ece and Akif at the same time, meaning that the questions were open for anyone to answer. Akif were the one that took the lead and dominated the interview. All of the urban planners were at the Gezi Protest on a daily basis. Note: I forgot to ask the respondents one important question regarding what they were hoping to achieve, which I noticed during the transcription process.

8. Canan 30 – after the interview with the urban planners, me and my friend met up with a friend of hers, Canan. We went to a café in Galatasaray and later I asked her if she wanted to participate in my study. Canan was an Alevi Muslim and Kemalist supporter, she did not, however, belong to any specific organization, political party or group. She was at the Gezi Protest almost every day and she had a tent in the Gezi Park where she and her friends slept. The interview took place at the same café and my friend took the role as a translator. After the interview we all went to the Gezi Park, which was around the corner from the café, and Canan gave me a tour round the area. She showed me where she had her tent, where they had the medical tent, where the art exhibition area was, which nearby hotels people took refuge in when the police attacked, where the barricades were placed etc.

9. Berkin 30 – I got in contact with Berkin through another friend of mine and we met up at Don Quixote on the third floor where he was working on a mural that portrayed different important moments from the Gezi Protest. Berkin told me that he was a socialist; he did not however belong to any specific organization, political party or group. Berkin used the same method as Sezi and answered the questions straight from my question form and I asked follow up questions if he mentioned something interesting. Berkin attended at the Gezi Protest every day.

10. Ceyhun 26 – Ceyhun is an acquaintance of Irem and Barış and we met up at a bar in Kadıköy. Ceyhun was a follower of the LGBT movement; he did not belong to any specific organization, political party or group. Besides the formal questions, Ceyhun talked a lot about politics and social problems related to Turkey and its history. Our meeting was spontaneous and unplanned. So when I
met him I had no question form with me, so I had to use the questions that I could remember from my head, which lead to the missing of a few questions.

6 The importance of social media

The earlier research mentioned social media as one of the main features of the Gezi Protest. So what characterized the usage of social media? Social media was one of the primary engines during the Gezi Protest when it came to spread information among the participants in the demonstration. Social media played important parts in two different ways:

1. News – According to the respondents, the majority of the Turkish mainstream media channels censored the early events around the Gezi Protest, which made social media the news channel, instead of mainstream media channels, and one of the main recruiters of participants.

2. Organizing – Social media, primarily Twitter and Facebook, functioned as a way to organize several events and spread the important information among the participants.

6.1 News

A large part of the respondents heard about the police violence in the Gezi Park through social media and friends, not the mainstream media, which caused people to gather at the park. Sezi told me how other occupiers used Twitter and Facebook during the first police attack in order to show the violent events at the Gezi Park:

At first day we were fifty people from the academics, planners, Greenpeace and other small groups. That day the police burned the tents. They wanted to take us out of the park and they wanted to take the trees away and when some of the people took photographs and put it on Twitter and on Facebook, so I think that that was the beginning. The other people were angry with how they treated us, because we just wanted to save the trees you know, it’s a park so it must not be a hotel or something else, that place have to stay as a park. While trying to save this park there was excessive use of force by the police.

Gözde was one of the respondents who discovered what was happening in Gezi Park from social media and decided to join the group mobilization:
First I saw it on Facebook because the mass-media wasn’t showing it on TV and you weren’t able to hear it on radios. I was like ‘ok I should join them’, and then I went to Taksim and that’s how everything started.

Hilal tells a similar story, which also includes her friends as an information source:

I heard about it from friends and social media, so I automatically got involved together with my friends... because there were no other way to get people informed so they used Facebook or Twitter or e-mail, because you know when the Turkish media was calmed down and people never had the chance to get informed by the media, so social media was the thing.

Cengiz, Zeynep, Irem and Sezi tells a story about the mainstream media, that when the violence was most intense during the first days of the demonstration, the Turkish news channel CNNTURK decided to show a documentary about penguins instead of the Gezi Protest. Cengiz emphasizes how people became more frustrated when the mainstream media ignored the violence that was taking place around Gezi Park and Taksim square and showed the penguins instead. The penguins became one of the symbols for the protests afterwards:

Actually it was random, but almost everyone heard of this from Twitter or other social media. I couldn’t believe my eyes in the first days of protests, thirty first of May, all my friends, completely and entirely apolitical, who don’t like to involve in protests, all my friends were there or coming there. We protested and were brutalized by the police all day... but almost none of the media channels showed it and I think this ignorance made people even angrier because they were there for their rights and they had been ignored the government, states, by everyone and now media was also ignoring them. That made them even more furious and when we were protesting, in its peak at that day, there were serious clashes with many injured people, we didn’t know if people were dead and when we put on the television we saw penguin documentaries, which was the symbol of media afterwards...

Zeynep also used social media for spreading news, information and pictures from the occupied area since the news were censored and didn’t reflect the real events at then mobilization. She also spread information to her friends abroad and informed them of the situation:

When I was in Taksim or in Gezi Park I Twittered about it or posted something on Facebook, ‘like this, this, this is going on, like I’m sure that the media isn’t showing this, but this is going on’. I took pictures and posted online and I think I helped my friends to see what was going on there... I send messages to my
foreigner friends for their awareness and for their support because also their media can show as they want.

When the mainstream media ignored to show the Turkish people what was really happening around Gezi Park and Taksim square people started to doubt the honesty and the integrity of the media. Irem observes this new doubt as a wakeup call for the people:

People were not aware of the lies of media, but they are aware of it now because they were in the squares, they saw the crowd and the violence. But when they were back home, when they saw the news they didn’t see anything, they saw the lies of media.

According to Akif, this doubt around the mainstream media has also started to concern people about the issues and violence in the eastern side of Turkey, regarding the conflicts with some of the Kurdish political organizations:

Socially many things changed and people really thinks different than before in many ways and people have learned that things were not like on television before, like this may be a part of social media as well. Western people saw for the first time in their life, they experienced such violence. Because in the east, it was always complex and what we know was only what the newspaper and the media told us. There was always people, suspicious people, not everyone, but mostly people were suspicious about this kind of resistance stories, because the media was not reflecting the true facts. Most of the people didn’t know it until Gezi and now everyone knows. No one trust the mainstream media, if mainstream media wants to tell something, no one believe it at first, people are more suspicious and that’s a big win if you ask me.

According to the respondents, the social media was quick to take over the important role as a resource in order to reach the true events, i.e. the events which the mainstream media did not show on national TV. Facebook and Twitter and other websites became the new main news sources of information, of what people saw as “correct information” regarding the Gezi Protest. Taksim Solidarity was one of the initiators behind the early occupation and provider of news which the mainstream media did not show and Caner explains how people started to use the Internet and the Taksim Solidarity’s Facebook page more efficiently during the Gezi Protest:

Everybody realized that the people weren’t aware of the struggle, about what was going around in the park and once they knew they supported the struggle that Taksim Solidarity was the authority for two years. They realized that and in just two or four days the number of followers on the Facebook page of the Taksim Solidarity was from five hundred to twelve thousand or something. Because we were the only
central news source, right news source, to view to the masses, and that was the address to learn the right news about the park.

6.2 Organizing

One thing that the respondents agreed on is that the social media played an important part in the organizing process, e.g. spreading information about the police location, updating the incidents or decisions on meetings and gatherings.

Cengiz observes that Facebook was less functional as a tool for organizing since it was overloaded with information; instead he highlights several of special accounts on Twitter with different organizing functions that the demonstrators used:

The social media was the primary engine of this protests, I was just using Facebook rarely, but I started to learn Twitter and I think that Facebook wasn’t very functional. Because there were information bombardment on Facebook that you couldn’t follow and, Twitter was brief and quick to get information and there were specialization in Twitter. For example, there were special accounts who told us: where the police was, were the protesters were and which path we should follow if there are police searches in the city. They were typing those things down and there were specialization accounts about first-aid, what to do in case of injury. And Twitter, I can say that Twitter saved us a lot of times.

Since the social media was an important tool for the demonstrators in the process, other opposite groups and people used it to spread wrong information through fake accounts according to Berkin:

When the Gezi Protest started, some people said it was around one million Twits during that time; it’s like a record for the Turkish people… a lot of old people started to use social media like Facebook and Twitter. Everybody tried to learn social media... Gezi made everyone want to learn how to use social media. Also government party supporters made a Twitter account and used it to spread wrong information.

6.3 Conclusion

When the mainstream media decided to censor the violent events that occurred in the occupied area around Gezi Park and Taksim square, occupiers and demonstrators took advantage of Internet and social media. This usage led to that social media got two important functions. The first one was to send out news, updates and pictures when something happened that was worth to report. It attracted both new participants and
shared awareness with the rest of Turkey and on an international basis. The second usage was the organizing part. People used social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter for keeping each other informed about the police locations, about meetings, about which route that was the most suitable, about what to do if you got injured etc.

If the government would have shut down the Internet from the beginning, combined with the censored mainstream media, I believe that the Gezi Protest would not have had the chance to grow into a massive group mobilization; there would be no awareness among the Turkish people outside of Istanbul that could reach such high numbers. When people used social media in terms of spreading news, e.g. the police violence, they also spread Smelser’s third step, generalized belief, among the citizens in Turkey. And this generalized belief regarding the police violence may have caused the fourth step, precipitating factors, the event lit the fuse.

In Egypt, during their revolution the social media was the primary engine behind the growth of the mobilization and the government shut down the Internet in their attempt to stop the demonstrators from spreading information or coordinate. And it did not work. The mass mobilization had already reached the sixth step, the operation of social control, and the awareness among the Egyptian people was already in motion and they found other ways to communicate with each other (Tilly & Wood 2013: 98). The mistake that the Egyptian government made was that they acted too late; the revolutionary movement was already in its peak when they made the decision to shut down the Internet. Just like in Egypt, the social media was the primary engine behind the large number of participants which was drawn to the Gezi Protest during those two weeks of protests.

7 Different reasons for participating

According to Smelser’s general belief theory, the common belief is the main factor behind the group mobilization since the belief needs to be recognized by a larger crowd, otherwise there is no big problem behind the gathering. The general belief goes hand-in-hand with Gurr’s RD, since there must be some kind of frustration or aggression behind the mobilization, something which a larger crowd can recognize. Previous research underlined that Turkey’s overall economic and development was rising, while at the
same time the government became more authoritarian and controlling. Could this be a part of the generalized belief or frustration?

The mission to save the Gezi Park was the reason for the first 50 environmentalists to occupy it, so the rescue of the park was an important reason during the whole process. However, the data implies three other reasons for being a part of the mobilization:

1. The most common reason, which every respondent emphasizes during the interviews, is the frustration, fear and disappointment they felt towards the current government.
2. The second reason was related to Smelser’s fourth and sixth step regarding the precipitating factors and operation of social control, the actual police violence.
3. The third reason was the solidarity and unity, to stand next to the other demonstrators, side by side facing a common threat.

7.1 Frustration, fear and disappointment

As mentioned in the earlier research chapter of this thesis, the current government had adapted a more authoritarian approach towards the population of Turkey, which was confirmed by the respondents since they expressed feelings of anger, fear and disappointment towards the government with its background in structural changes and general attitudes, such as: recent legal regulations with religious background, governmental habit of interfering in the private sphere of the people and the limitation of personal freedom, such as freedom of speech and various human rights.

Burak thinks the governmental regulations and attitudes aim to take control over the population of Turkey in religious terms through small steps:

*It was a collection of many small things, done step by step by the government. I’m not so conservative, but I do believe in some religious things. I might not do those things as well as they should be done and sometimes I go to bars and clubs and other things. It’s not a bad thing you know. I also believe in God, but the government wants to limit all the actions step by step, our freedom step by step because our Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, he also mentions how many children people should have or if we can we have abortion or not. There are many things he mentions that cannot be accepted in more educated countries such as England or Germany. Those countries don’t involve in people’s private life’s, but in Turkey our*
prime minister have so many things to say about how many children we will have or can we drink alcohol until ten o’clock or not. They want to take the rope; they want to take control of everything step by step...

Burak emphasizes his own belief in God, yet he also emphasizes that he believes that the government uses religion as a tool for minimizing the freedom of the people. Gözde also believes that the new legal regulations are small steps towards an uncertain future for the population of Turkey:

Many people who didn’t vote for the AKP party, they were really mad and angry because the government did so many things. For example, they wanted to stop the rights to abortion and they wanted to set up a system, like the one in Sweden, they said that people would be able to buy alcohol only until ten o’clock. But it was like a hidden agenda in their mind, because Turkey doesn’t have an alcohol problem like the Nordic countries, so people were so mad because in turkey people consume alcohol at a very low rate, so people who are very liberal they were really mad because they knew, they thought that the government had a hidden agenda. They did really small but important steps, so people were angry, but they didn’t show their anger so it was kind of like a reaction, it was an eruption.

Akif also thinks that the new legal regulations, the invasion on the private sphere and also the structural economic reforms introduced by the government as a part of the frustration, which has grown stronger over the years. Akif also mentions that the government has an authoritarian way of ruling the country which puts even more pressure on the people:

It’s not only the park issue because there have been many things, especially in the last months, the last year, last three years. There are many issues that people get angry day by day you know, because the behavior of the government, like yelling each day to the citizens of Turkey, just yelling and ordering and trying... threatening and pressure the people. Every day it gets bigger and heavier on the people, like we carry something really heavy on our shoulders and every day, imagine that it’s getting heavy and Gezi Park was just like the final drop of water... like telling women ‘at least three children you should have’, it’s none of your business, but insisting and yelling why you only have one child, like new laws about abortion or buying alcohol after ten o’clock or just the taxes we are paying you know, it get doubled and doubled and doubled...

Akif observes the same changes as Burak and Gözde, the only difference being that he doesn’t emphasize a governmental religious conspiracy behind it. However, they all agree that these government regulations and attitudes are important factors behind the large participation among the people and groups in the Gezi Protest.
Like the other interviewees, Barış (2) emphasizes government invasion of the private sphere. He also adds that this was not the beginning of a demonstration because of the current government; he believes that the Gezi Protest was just a part of a long-term struggle in Turkey’s history, a struggle that has its roots in the rights and freedom of the people:

We didn’t think forward when we joined this demonstration, before that the government was in to peoples personal lives with issues like abortion and woman rights, our reaction was against that... we have a different situation than the rest of Sweden and Europe, political, cultural and social conditions are so different, you can’t say that Gezi Park just started and finished, the fighting started with the history of this country.

In relation to the current government’s reputation, which is known through the high amount of imprisoned journalists in Turkey, the question of limited personal freedom and freedom of speech is emphasized by Cengiz:

We didn’t have free space to express these ideas. People who were expressing their ideas are either ideological, which is something like a curse for Turkey, or a terrorist and easily get imprisoned. Turkey is the country in the world with the second highest journalist arrests and the Gezi Protest was an outburst of operation actually, I was really happy to be there, to show them we are not silent as people, we are powerful, we will not be oppressed by you, these are our thoughts and we will always be here. If I was injured or even worse, maybe I would go again to protest.

Even if the new legal regulations regarding alcohol and abortion, the government’s statement of how many children a family should have, the question of limited rights and freedom was invoked during the interviews as the main reasons for frustration. One of the respondents, Canan, brings up her personal reasons for her frustration towards the government:

I wanted the government to resign; also it would be beneficial in the turns of my job... I’m a flight attendant at Turkish Airlines; there were a lot of sanctions. For example, when we were on a strike, they were not supposed to employ new people but they employed like 1500 people while the other flight attendants were on strike.

While the respondents were primary focused on the wider legal regulations and the general attitude from the government, Canan’s frustration was rooted in her own personal experience of encountering decisions made by the government. A decision that
she considered as a betrayal in the way of handling a problem affected Canan both on an economic level and in terms of future security.

Caner’s main reason for participating was to save the park from being demolished since he is one of the initiators behind the park’s first occupation. However, he still expresses a mild personal weariness vis-à-vis the government and the P.M. Erdoğan:

*I use the ferry every day, in the morning and also in the evening to go come and back to my work and home. In the ferries there are a lot of TV’s, but there is only one TV channel and every day, each time I use the ferry there is an opening ceremony or something like that in the TV and our prime minister talking and keep talking, at this for five years I really got bored seeing him every day, I want the prime minister, like invisible, I don’t know.*

Even though Caner’s tiredness of the government is not based on laws or attitudes, he still expresses a sort of frustration since Caner also wishes the P.M. Erdoğan to become “invisible”.

### 7.2 Police violence as a trigger factor

The police used much violence during their attempts to disperse the occupiers in Gezi Park, which later was shown on social media. Ceyhun was one of the respondents who decided to join the demonstration in order to help other people when the police violence against the occupiers started to get out of hand:

*It’s like, we all saw the extreme police violence in the morning, like early morning in the first of June, like late night in the thirty-first of May and earlier morning in the first of June and then we decided that we should go there and we only knew that there was going to be a huge, huge protest and you know, we just prepared our anti-acid solution and we just went there.*

Cengiz works as a freelance photographer and he saw a chance to use his working skills and his camera when the police interfered with the occupiers. Cengiz’s plans rapidly changed when he was injured by a rubber bullet and also by seeing other injured people among the masses. That was the moment when he decided to join:

*Actually I was eating a peaceful lunch with my family in Taksim and I heard the sounds and smelled the gas, so I brought my camera to shoot photos and within the first hour I got shot from my leg, even though I wasn’t protesting. It was obvious that I had a big camera and bags. I had seen many injured people so I*
just left my camera and decided to participate. It was a very different moment, it felt really, really right to be there with them.

On the other hand, Yücel expresses sadness towards the government regarding how they have been ruled the country during the last ten years and also how they decided to use violence as a method in dispersing the occupiers from the park. This violence became a reason for him to participate:

*When I left the house I didn’t have any plans, but there was a reaction against the police violence and also with this increased violence for ten years people were under pressure and that pressure effected people. Individually I didn’t have any plans, but I was sad about my country and that’s why I joined the demonstrations. In case, I had political side, but my aim wasn’t political, it was a spirit thing.*

Akif who was at the Gezi Park from the very beginning, he reflects over how the mobilization grows larger day by day after the first police attack:

*It was like the day after the police attacked for the first time, there were a hundred people, then it was a thousand people, five thousand people, and fifty thousand people. But it kept doubling because the police kept attacking us.*

7.3 I just had to be there…

Even if the government and the police violence were crucial factors behind the anger and disappointment of the respondents, some of them did not have those two factors as the actual main reason for participating in the demonstration and occupation, at least not in the very beginning. It seemed like the main reasons for just being there were about solidarity, compassion and unity with the other demonstrators and occupiers, to stand next to them during the violence, becoming a part of the occupation movement or help them to build up the mobilization. Some of the respondents thought rationally, the more people, the greater chance for success and some were there of political reasons. And a few of the respondents even expressed some sort of guilt as a motivation, since they believed that they were going to regret it afterwards if they decided not to participate and miss the opportunity to express their own feelings or help the other demonstrators.
Gözde compares the feeling she had towards the demonstrators and occupiers with an imagined patriotic feeling of supporting your country during wartime, the feeling of solidarity:

Yeah, at that time you feel so, because it's that feeling of solidarity I think. It makes you feel like you are going into a war or something, being in the military I guess.

Gözde felt that she had to support the other demonstrators and protesters in one way or another, like it was her national duty. Barış had a similar feeling. He felt that he had no other choice; it was his duty to be there next to the other demonstrators no matter the consequences and risks that the violence brought:

It wasn’t our choice to lose eyes, loose lives, getting arrested and I would be unhappy not to face one of them. I could lose my eye or I could die for this.

Erol rationalized that his own participation was necessary for the future development of the demonstration; the more people, the greater chance of success:

Someone had to be there and why not me? And all my friends, and that’s all, someone had to be there to make some crowd and to announce what we wanted.

Canan rationalized her participation with the same aspect as Erol did: “I thought ‘the more, the better’, so with a lot of people it could be effective”.

Hilal was at the Gezi Protest and in the frontline to represent what she believed in, Hilal explained that she was in the frontline to represent her beliefs as a feminist, a Muslim and a human being. She just had to be there:

Because I wanted to make clear that I had a premium as well as a scarfed Muslim lady, as a Turkish lady, as a human and I felt that I had to be there, there was no other reason.

Burak was one of the respondents who expressed a sort of guilt which would haunt him if he decided not to participate and stayed apart from helping his friends or the other demonstrators:

I had to show my feelings and express myself, gathering with the other people and joining them and resist the police and the government forces, whatever they are... If I wasn’t there I would be, I would not feel so comfortable with myself because many of my friends were there, but I wouldn’t be there. If my friend
would be injured, but not me, I wouldn’t feel comfortable with myself. My conscience wouldn’t be so comfortable so it was totally worth it.

Akif also expresses the feeling of guilt that he would have if he decided not to participate, he had a responsibility to fulfill just like Gözde and Barış:

It’s like consciously, when I’m old, when I remember those days, I will feel that I have done what I had to do. Otherwise it would be more like a kind of guilt that you feel for many, many years. We are consciously clear and relaxed and we all believed that we are right and that we did the right thing.

During the early stages of the mass mobilization P.M. Erdoğan held a speech in which he accused the demonstrators and occupiers for being çapulcu (marauders), provocateurs and terrorists. Akif still reflects on the situation even though none of the actual respondents considered this accusation as a reason for participating:

Prime Minister’s declaration was also provoking people, so they all blamed people from the Gezi, like provocateurs, but if we search for provocation we have to look at the declaration of the Prime Minister and of the mayor, and also the attitude of the police, the violence etc.

7.4 Conclusion

As both the earlier research and my data showed, the respondents’ reason for joining the Gezi Protest were mainly rooted in government issues and decisions, even if some of them also underlined the collectivistic and solidary feeling as important factors for joining the Gezi Protest. The governments’ new legal regulations and statements, rooted in more conservative religious beliefs, were not approved by the respondents. They saw it as interference with their private sphere which created a sort of fear of future deprivations. Statistics presents Turkey as a country which improves their GDP and HDI every year through decisions made by the current government. The people in Turkey live longer, earn more money, and have better and longer education. Turkey as a nation has become economically stronger over the years since the AKP got into office. However, instead of focusing on the positive development of Turkey, the respondents see the more negative aspects with the more authoritarian and conservative government. The several of acts from the government which the people sees as intrude on the private sphere weights heavier than economic, educational and other life related developments.
Another thing which I found interesting was that the earlier research underlined the high participation in the Gezi protest of the middle class and educated people. My data showed a similar pattern since the majority of the respondents were from middle class families or had work their way up to middle class and a lot of them had higher educations. And at the same time, this is the segment of society which the new government has benefited the most, while the poorer working class did not take much space in the Gezi Protest.

Gözde believes that the governments’ structural changes were a part of a secret agenda, a more conservative and Islamic future for the country, which she wanted to prevent, while Yücel joined because of the police violence. Some respondents joined because of the solidarity feeling and some people probably joined just to stand up against the government after their provoking statements which declared the Gezi protesters as marauders and terrorists. The latter reason was referring to the opposite effect regarding the negative words of the P.M. Erdoğan towards the demonstrators and occupiers. As a reaction, some people chose to be one of the marauders or provocateurs instead of hesitating to join them.

In order for a mobilization to proceed to Smelser’s fourth step in the value-added theory, precipitating factors, there must be a common-belief among the people who are soon to be engaged in a mass mobilization. In one way the anger towards the government was a common-belief, on the other hand, other things were also sources behind the anger. Except for rescuing the park, the data showed three other main reasons for joining the Gezi Protest; yet, there might be several of other main reasons. There was not one universal general-belief that all demonstrators agreed on, even though the governmental issues were a main reason among the respondents. During the first days there was a common-belief, the rescue of Gezi Park. However, when other people started to join in this cause it slowly faded away within the diversity of other causes and demands. Gezi Protest moved further from being a demonstration with one face to a demonstration with thousand faces, and Gezi Park moved further from being the issue to becoming the symbol for the Gezi Protest.
8 Three different categories of demonstrators

The data reveals that there was not only one type of demonstrators who were involved with the Gezi Protest. I discovered three categories that were involved in the demonstration.

- Supporters – The supporters were the ones who supported the occupiers and demonstrators by participating as professionals and non-demonstrators such as doctors, veterinarians and lawyers. Some were sending free food, water and medicine to the occupied area. Others were banging pots outside their windows or balconies as a symbol for supporting the protests and some used social media as a tool for supporting the Gezi Protest.

- Nonviolent protesters – These protesters were seen in the occupied area most of the time. They were nonviolent and active both in the background and in the frontline close to the police. Their main weapon was shouting, singing and passive resistance e.g. the standing man (a position where demonstrators stood still on one spot for hours) or reading books in front of the police.

- Soldiers – The soldiers were the ones who kept themselves in the frontline as much as possible and stayed there during both nights and days. They were in charge of keeping the barricades and protecting the other demonstrators from the police.

8.1 The supporters

No one among the interviewed respondents can be classified as only a supporter since they all participated as protesters; yet they mention these helpful acts during the interview and a few of them acted as supporters when they were outside the occupied area. Zeynep helped the other respondents by buying them material resources and supported them through social media when she was unavailable to attend herself:

*I was there for only one night. But after the attacks I was there for three days and then I kept supporting them on social media and just buying their needs, but I couldn’t be there from the fourth of June because of my exams.*
Sezi was surprised in the beginning when food, water and medicine started to be delivered to the park right after the first police disperse attempt:

It was helpful, we didn’t pay for the food, no one paid. You know, someone was ordering the food and there was water and medicine and we didn’t know who bought it. Because the people, I think, that could not be there physically, they wanted to help like this, sending medicines, water or food, which is another kind of helping.

Burak emphasizes the same theme:

All kinds of people started to come to help the protester, some of them brought some food from home, some of them brought water to drink. Because many people were sleeping in Gezi Park and could not leave, because if everybody leaves at the same time, then the police would come and take the park away from the protester.

At one point I was talking to Irem about the supporting category and she brought up the example of the people who banged the pots from their windows and balconies. She told me that the government tried to forbid this kind of supporting act and that P.M. Erdoğan mentioned in a speech that neighbors should report to the police if they see anything rebellious. She also mentioned that doctors, veterinarians and lawyers were there as volunteers in order to help the demonstrators. Burak also emphasized the doctors and lawyers situation and how the government tried to minimize their volunteering act by threatening them:

If you resist to the police and if it is a demonstration against the government, you can be treated as a terrorist. Police can arrest lawyers, doctors or such professionals if they interfere as professionals. Before these demonstrations, the police could not arrest any lawyers. But after these demonstrations, the police can arrest you, me or any lawyer, it doesn’t matter. They have more power now because they have to scare people.

8.2 The nonviolent protesters

This category is the one that symbolizes the Gezi Protest and the majority of the respondents fit in to this category: Burak, Erol, Gözde, Hilal, Irem, Barış, Zeynep, Yügel, Sezi, Caner, Ece, Akit, Canan and Ceyhun. They all participated as nonviolent protesters who used passive resistance as a method during the protests. When the police
attacked they did not strike back, they ran away. That was the most common defense technique among the respondents. Erol reflects over the situation while he is laughing:

*We were running away all the time. When they started to shoot at us with some gas-capsules, we ran away, that was our way to defend ourselves.*

Burak follows up on the theme:

*I was peaceful, I didn’t throw any stones or any teargas capsules back, I didn’t throw anything. I tried to run away from the attacks of the police.*

Yücel was not in the frontline, although he was still exposed to teargas and police attacks, and he also used the running defense technique:

*I faced the teargas several times, but I was not in the frontline. In the demonstrations wasn’t in an order because when people tried to get together, police were attacking us and we would run away and several minutes later, we were trying to come back together again and the police attacked again. We were constantly under attacks and teargas rain.*

Another method in terms of passive resistance was standing in front of the police while reading books in colorful outfits. Irem laughs and describes what she saw while she is referring to the method as psychological violence against the police and not a passive resistance:

*First of all, the protesters used psychological violence too, because the police was like a grey robot, but people with colorful things and colorful dresses stood among the police and they read books in front of them, but the police couldn’t do anything. They can’t arrest a person for reading a book and they can’t shoot teargas since they were just reading books. There are photographs of that when you can see the fear in the police eyes; I think it’s a real psychological violence against an ordering person.*

Hilal was one of the nonviolent protesters who were in the frontline:

*I wasn’t even protected, I had no mask and I didn’t even have glasses. I just had my scarf and I put it like this (showing how the scarf were protecting her face) and then the attacks started and after two minutes we just run away directly to the park and tried to hide us there, it was the night of the fifteenth I think, June fifteenth, it was a Saturday I think...*
As mentioned earlier, Hilal was in the frontline to represent her beliefs. Akif was also in the frontline for a similar and yet different reason: “Well, I mean as one of the representatives of Taksim Solidarity I was in the frontline”. Since Akif had a big responsibility he had to show his participation in more dangerous zones of the demonstration. His important position included a certain responsibility towards the large crowd; he also wanted to express what he believed in, an untouched Gezi Park.

8.3 The soldiers

Three of the respondents were categorized as soldiers: Cengiz, Barış (2) and Berkin. The soldiers were the ones who were always in the frontlines and next to the barricades. According to them, their mission was to protect the larger nonviolent masses from the police attacks and they often used violence back when the police attacked.

A large part of the respondents observed that the frontline soldiers were mostly football teams’ supporters and left-wing groups and they played an important role as leading groups during the Gezi Protest, groups which people respected and listened too according to Gözde:

_We have a football team called Beşiktaş and they were very active and they were leading the protests, they called themselves the charge group. The Beşiktaş supporters, a group of young and like strong men and people were listening to them because the protest was in Taksim, which is close to Beşiktaş district. So they were organizing people and people were listening to them, people respected them. And also, very leftist people, I can give you names, specific names, but very like strongly leftist people, they were leading the whole people._

Both Barış (2) and Berkin are socialists and both had participated in several demonstrations before. Berkin tells me how he has always been participating in certain protests and demonstrations because of his socialist beliefs:

_I’ve always participated in protests and demonstrations since ten years, because I have an ideology, I believe in socialism. I’m always participating in all kind of protests since ten or fifteen years back, so Gezi is not the first protest._

Barış (2) has a similar experience regarding the protests and demonstrations: “I’m actively taking part in demonstrations since high school along with other socialists”.

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Later during the interview, Barış (2) continues:

*I was always in the frontline. I had gloves and mask and my duty there was to throw capsules in secured areas when the police shot at the people. Many people came and took care of my eyes and they gave me medicines and I also joined to help with the cleaning works in the occupied area.*

Barış (2) has participated in several demonstrations and during the Gezi Protest he was equipped with gasmask and gloves, and his duty was to stand in the frontline and throw away the teargas canisters which the police shot at the demonstrators.

On the other hand, Cengiz participated for the first time in a demonstration. In the beginning his only aim was to take photos during the demonstrations in order to collect them for a documentary and while he was doing that he got shot by a rubber bullet. It was after the injury that Cengiz decided to join in the demonstration. Since he had no earlier experience in protest and demonstrations or how to protect himself, he learned it the hard way and he got more experienced as the days went on:

*The first day I just had an operation mask, which had no use at all. In the other days we got more experienced, we got helmets, we got gasmasks, gloves to throw the gas-bombs back and used slingshots later on and throw the bottles we had found...*

Berkin’s experience as a left-wing demonstrator is reflected in his discussion about barricades and how they used them as the main tool for self-defense:

*Socialist groups was in the front and the nationalist and all the other people in the back...no one could make barricades and the socialist groups, we knew because we had earlier experience in demonstrations and we told them that we could make them... we always make barricades for keeping the police from hitting us and they are like a symbol for us now. The police can attack and try to smash the barricades, it stands... the barricades were very important for self-defense, because we kept twenty huge barricades in Taksim when we captured Taksim and we captured Taksim for two weeks against the government...*

Berkin underlines how the more experienced left-wing groups used their knowledge in order to build up barricades and how they were respected by the other demonstrators. The barricades also played an important role in the actual organization process. Through the barricades people learned how to cooperate in different situations and people connected according to Cengiz:
After the first days when we occupied the Taksim square and build barricades, I was at the Gümüssuyu barricade, there were three main clashing points and I was responsible for one of them, with my several friends of course. In the daytime we would be building barricades, organizing people to carry them to specific places, carrying bottles and also trying to teach people were to go, were to stay, when to run, when to attack etc.

Cengiz and his friends were also in charge of one of the main areas for the potential police clashes. That was an important responsibility for them. According to Cengiz the soldiers were the minority group:

In the frontlines there was always violence, generally there were thousands of people protesting, singing and there were about twenty to thirty people clashing with the police.

When I asked them if they considered their participation as nonviolent and peaceful, Barış (2) answered “absolutely” while Cengiz and Berkin answered no. Berkin explained that he had to use violence since it was necessary during the current situation which they faced. Therefore, he was not a supporter of the nonviolent movement:

I don’t know, but I don’t support the peaceful protests. We have to show the police that we were strong and powerful too... we threw the stones and revolution groups used fireworks and it was very good for them because the police hesitated. The stones and the fireworks pulled back all the police from the demonstrators.

Violence was a way for Berkin to protect him and the other demonstrators, and also to show the police that they were willing to fight back. Cengiz also believes in violence as a method for scaring away the police or keep them at a certain distance while protecting the larger nonviolent group from getting injured. The general violence level overall and the injuries among the demonstrators were high. Cengiz says:

Because it was in the frontlines where the police was attacking us and it was really bad. People were badly injured, blooded heads and when the police were taking people in custody, generally people between fifteen and twenty five. They were brutally beating people up and harassing women and one got raped in a police car. We had a solid resistance; we used slingshot, stones and throw bottles at them. When there were a lot of people clashing actually, police was afraid to send the custody squad to take you under custody. If you had resisted good, they just shoot from a distance so less people got injured, the main reason was that... actually it was practically to scare the police, to create a resistance there. Not all people thought that actually, they thought that they deserved it and etc.
When I asked Barış (2) if he ever stood in the frontline he told me yes and explained that he always stands in the frontline:

*I was always like this, on the first May, in the university when I joined demonstrations; there was no reason for me not to be in the front.*

While Barış (2) was in the frontline and protected the larger crowd from the teargas canisters, both Cengiz and Berkin shared another reason for standing in the frontline. They both had anger towards the police. Berkin was an experienced demonstrator who had confronted police violence several times before. This made it logical for him to have anger towards the police:

*I don’t want to stay back and protest because I’ve been in protests for ten years and I don’t like the police. I’m used to this kind of danger. I can stay in the frontline of the crowds and I’m not scared of the police anymore.*

While Berkin was used to police violence and rationalized his actions, Cengiz answer was more emotional:

*Within the last year I hated police violence, it never changed against children, shooting people, oppressing woman, torturing people in the police stations. Actually, police beating is considered normal in Turkey; torture mostly isn’t approved but not regarded as something extreme. Also police killings are only protested by usual activist, not much people. I was really angry about that, the main reason was that, that I putted myself in risk.*

The violent actions of Cengiz and Berkin, who were throwing stones and bottles or using fireworks against the police, created arguments with some of the nonviolent demonstrators. While Berkin and Cengiz saw their actions both as self-defense and a method of keeping the police at distance in order to protect other demonstrators, some other nonviolent protesters saw them as troublemakers. None of the nonviolent protesters who participated in the interviews had any problems with the soldiers’ action since they believed that the soldiers’ use of violence towards the police was an act of self-defense or in order to protect the larger mass. Caner even expresses gratitude towards the soldiers: “we don’t know their name, but it’s like my subjective opinion, but we owe them a lot because of their resistance”. Hilal saw the soldiers’ action as self-defense although she believed that throwing stones was unnecessary and she
emphasizes how the other nonviolent demonstrators took care of the problem when they saw violence from the demonstrator’s side:

You can’t control everyone; of course there are people like doing more violent things like throwing stones to banks or whatever, but it mostly went nonviolent. But you know, an important point is, if the demonstrators saw that someone was throwing stones, they always took them in the back and told them to calm down and you know, they took care of it, like they were aware of it and they always had an eye on the people.

These nonviolent demonstrators saw them as troublemakers apart from protectors of the larger group. Cengiz believes that these demonstrators were naive in their opinions and they had no experience in being in the frontlines:

... some people were saying ‘don’t throw stones, don’t forget this is a passive resistance, this is what they want us to do’, but I find this opinion a bit naïve because people who weren’t throwing stones towards the police wasn’t and have never seen the frontlines, when they were trying to run over us with riot vehicles and directly aiming us with gas-bomb shells and rubber bullets we didn’t have much choice. I would love to hear their opinions when they were there in the frontlines.

To stay peaceful and passive when the police attacked was not an option for Cengiz and he believed that violence towards the police was necessary in that situation. Berkin thought that the other nonviolent demonstrators’ opinions were wrong; they had to resist when the police used violence against them:

If we tried to throw the stones to the police everybody said ‘stop that, don’t do that, don’t throw the stones there, it looks like an civil obedience’, they believed that we should be together with the peaceful protesters. In the law you can protest everything, but it looks like there is some disadvantages for me, for us, for us protesters, which is my opinion. Because if you don’t use any violence and the police always attack ... you can use some strong weapons against the police, throwing stones, maybe Molotov cocktails or something like that.

There were not always problems with the police. When they did not attack, the situation inside the occupied area was calm and peaceful. Just as some nonviolent demonstrators tried to prevent the soldiers from throwing stones towards the police and shops, Cengiz had the same behavior towards the other soldiers who tried to provoke the police when the situation was calm:
... there were some nights, two or three nights that the police didn’t visit the barricades and there were no problem at all, no one attacked the shops, no one fight between each other, when it was police, only the existence of police, people start shouting slogans, singing and we tried to stop people from attacking police, ‘if they don’t attack us we won’t attack them’. And sometimes they were shooting water cannons and rubber bullets just for pleasure, just to start clashes. Actually protesters had their own mistakes, sometimes protesters attacked the police just to pull them to the barricades, but people made sense in trying to stop them.

8.4 Conclusion

The three different categories were represented by the people who were involved within the Gezi Protest in different ways. Some of the supporters were there as professionals, others supported the demonstrators through sending gifts to them, taking up the fight through Facebook or Twitter, giving them shelter or helping them morally by banging pots and pans to show their support. The ones who were there physically were not there as protesters e.g. doctors and lawyers who volunteered, they were there as professionals and their mission was to help the people who needed their help, not to demonstrate for a certain reason. The government punished supporters who acted as professionals at the demonstration (e.g. doctors and lawyers) through arrestments, as if they were demonstrators who had done something wrong by following their ethical codes, which is to help people who need their help.

The most typical category among the respondents was the nonviolent protesters. They were there for various reasons. They used passive resistance as a protest method and they did not resort to violence when the police were violent, instead they chose to run away or stand still in front of them.

The soldiers were the protectors of the large masses; they used violence towards the police when they attacked the demonstrators in matter of both self-defense and to protect the others. When the police shot with tear-gas, they threw the canisters back, when the police attacked, they threw stones, bottles or shot fireworks to keep them away. However, Barış (2) did not see his acts as violent, while Berkin and Cengiz did.

If we apply Tuckman’s performing process, the respondents took certain roles during the demonstrations, roles that they could relate to and that reflected their own beliefs.
The supporters had the role as helpers and they contributed in different ways to keep the mobilization alive through material and human resources, moral and support.

The nonviolent protesters believed in nonviolent resistance. Even though they were angry with the police and the government, they did not believe that violence was the solution to the problem. The problem itself already emerged from violence and oppression. They took the role as the large peaceful mass that came to represent the whole mobilization according to media outside of Turkey and on the social media. However, the interviews have clearly proved that violence among the demonstrators did occur and that the Gezi Protest was not an all peaceful mobilization.

The soldiers were the ones which used violence towards the police, but on the other hand they also took the role as protectors of the large nonviolent mass through both a defensive and more violent acts. Barış (2) did not believe that he was violent when he threw the teargas capsules back to the police; it was self-defense and a way to protect the larger crowd. Cengiz and Berkin did believe that their acts were violent and they were proud of it since both of them had anger towards the police, and also that they knew that they were protecting the others through using violence when the police used violence. The soldiers believed that they protected the people, it was in a way their duty and they had an obligation to use the methods they found necessary to fulfill their roles. Even though none of the respondents expressed that they had a problem with the methods which the soldiers used, some demonstrators did have a problem with it since they believed in a full nonviolent resistance. Both Cengiz and Berkin believe that these people were naive.

If we analyze the performing process together with the norming process, it seems as if there were two different versions of the norming in the performing process. The nonviolent protesters believed that nonviolent resistance were the norming process, while the soldiers considered self-defense and violence as a part of their norming roles. These nonviolent protesters did not want to be associated with the methods of the soldiers, which they believed destroyed the nonviolent reputation of the Gezi Protest and that the soldiers’ violence attracted more violence from the police. The soldiers also had rules in their performing process, such as not aggregating the police or destroy property without any reason.
Without the minority group of soldiers, the Gezi Protest would probably not have lasted as long as it did since the level of the police violence was high. If the only method had been peaceful resistance, the police would have succeeded with their mission long before the three weeks that it took them to disperse the large crowd. The soldiers were mainly represented by left-wingers, revolutionary groups, anarchists and football supporters. They were experienced within the field of encountering violence and use violence, and they used their skills for fighting the police and holding them back through barricades. The soldiers who did not have previous experience used the occasion as a learning process about how to act, how to build barricades, how to protect themselves, how to use certain methods for keeping the police on a distance etc.

9 People and groups at the Gezi Protest

As mentioned in the introduction, there was a huge variety of people and groups within the Gezi Protest and the respondents confirm this. Several of the respondents underline the presence of mothers and fathers, educated and uneducated people, old and young people, religious and non-religious people, people with right-wing and left-wing ideologies etc. Ceyhun summarized it as: “Basically it was from every part of society, except for the one that support the government”.

9.1 People

Several respondents mention that the demonstration started with activists and younger educated people, and afterwards the diversity spread to all the corners of the society. Gözde described the early stages like this:

... in the beginning I think it was more educated people involved in the protests and then people from all age groups, like mothers joined, there was one special day for mothers I remembered, they came with their daughters and sons and like there were people from all ages, races and ethnicities I think. But in the very beginning it was all about activists and educated people, like more elitist people let’s say, I don’t know.

Gözde mentioned that they arranged a special day for mothers and Burak was one of the respondents who went to the Gezi Protest with his mother:
First young people started to come and later some old people also started to come with their children, for example, once I went with my mom and one of my mother’s friends was also there.

Hilal confirm that the Gezi Protest started with younger people and also underline the latter participation of the younger people’s parents that Gözde and Burak mentioned:

... it started mostly with young people and when people realized ‘okay, there is something going wrong’, like, then parents of the demonstrators children started to come and joined them and you could find like people from every age and every social level, it was really mixed.

Zeynep continues on the same pattern as the others and she also highlights that both homosexuals and homophobes were active at the demonstration:

There were no different types; there were all types of people. There were religious people, there were left-sided, there were right-sided or very, I don’t know, students, men, women, gays, homophile’s, like any type of people, every type of people were there. And I think that was the reason why it spread that much, because it wasn’t just for one group.

The Gezi Protest were not just for one type of people or group. It started off as an attempt to save the Gezi Park by a handful of people and after a few days the park occupation had grown into a large group mobilization where the park issue had become one of many issues.

9.2 Groups

Just like the diversity of people there was a huge diversity among the different groups that participated, e.g. political groups, movement groups, different organizations etc. Hilal summarizes the diversity of the different groups:

Hilal: A lot of people, we had the minorities like Kurdish people, Alevi people, you had lesbians, gays, LGBT, you had Muslim people there that are against the government because he’s using the religion to get in power and it’s not about Islam, it’s not like being religious or not, there are a lot of more people, of course, people who are more national people, who are more into this Turkey and Atatürk thing and they want to keep the government and the system, like not mixing religion and government, people that were fighting for animal rights, or fighting for like, against the pollution, against everything, there were a lot of people there.
According to Cengiz, a large variety of groups were involved. However, there were two groups that had more followers than the others, first it was the Kemalists and the second was, strange enough, several of different groups which he counted as one unity:

*I can divide ninety percent of the protesters consisted of two different groups. First secularists, patriots, and by patriots I mean there are two different words for nationalists in Turkey, one is like patriots and the other social-democrats nationalists, Kemalists. They believe in a secular Turkey and they believe in protecting Atatürk's legacy.... I think the second group was activists, revolutionists, socialists, communists, anarchists and in the groups of activists there were artists, environmentalists, democrats and mainly people who just believed in activism and nothing else, apart from that the other ten percent there were many, many groups.*

The larger groups were according to Cengiz, the Kemalists and a mixture of activists, revolutionists and political groups. Berkin saw a similar pattern with a wide representation of different groups, but he did also point out Kemalists and different socialists/communists groups as some of the main actors in the Gezi Protest. However, Berkin did not include revolutionists, anarchists or activists, instead he included the nineties generation, which he referred to as the Z generation:

*In protests there is a lot of different kind of groups but there were probably two or three big huge groups here, one group is socialist and communist groups and the second group is secularist and nationalist Kemalist groups and they are always carrying the Atatürk flags, if you see the Turkish flag with Atatürk. Nationalist and Kemalist groups, socialist groups and the nineties generation, we call them Z-generation, and grow up with computers, they are like a nerd generation, we call them hipsters and nerds, strong together with shoulder and fan supporters, football supporters here and also anti-capitalist Muslims and LGBT organizations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual organizations, a lot of people here and small groups...*  

Since there were a wide variety among both people and groups that participated, it’s logical to assume that there also were some sort of collaboration or conflict process between them and the next sections will focus on that.

9.3 Collaborating group behavior

The respondents underline their own surprise in how well the collaboration between the people and groups turned out during the demonstration, especially with the focus on the different groups involved. The data shows a remarkable tendency for a collaboration
between the groups that you least could expect to collaborate. However, according to Barış (2) they were separated in the beginning: “First groups were separated in the first days, like in the thirty-first of May and then people decided to take down their flags and they united as one”. Ceyhun summarizes the collaboration process like:

It was remarkable, it was unbelievable, really, because you know, everybody was helping basically each other, nobody was left out, nobody was standing aside, everybody was just getting involved with things and helping people without, I mean, even bitching about it after all.

The collaboration focus lays primarily on two different groups: football supporters and different Muslim groups, e.g. anti-capitalistic and radical Muslims.

9.4 The football supporters

Burak reflects over the different football teams’ collaboration:

...sometimes football supporters like Beşiktas, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray were moving the same, acting the same because usually they don’t like each other, they are against each other but in the protests they gathered with the same ideas and they were acting like the same team supporters.

These three supporter groups have always been enemies like most football supporter groups are, however it changed during the Gezi Protest and they keep peace even today according to Barış:

There are three hooligan football team supporter groups, they are the three biggest groups, teams of Turkey, Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktas, supporters of that groups but they are actually known as violent hooligans but they didn’t show violence and they stuck together, they wore each other uniforms in the demonstrations and they made campaigns on Facebook and Twitter, on social media which are still going on now. At 34th minute of every football match they shout slogans, “everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is united”, every 34th minute of every match is silent because they know that the slogans are coming.

Cengiz saw this collaboration between the football supporters as an historical event since they confronted the police and not each other:

... one of the most amazing things to see was to see Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray and Beşiktas supporters together, because that’s not what you can see in Turkey, football is a very serious thing and they clashed, probably for the first time in history, they clashed together against the police.
9.5 The Muslims

Several people have mentioned the same scenario which includes anti-capitalistic Muslims and other groups’ collaboration. Cengiz, Irem and Sezi told me about one special event that took place when the Muslims were about to start praying in Gezi Park during a police intervention. Irem reflects over the situation:

*It was at the Muslim religion day and it was a group called anti-capitalist Muslims and on the prayer time it was under police attack, that area, and anti-capitalist Muslims started to pray and atheists and also gay people made a circle around them and protected them against the police. It was one of the best moments. It was a religious month which they fast and they start to eat when the sun is not rising, when the sun set they eat and they made huge long tables for eating, as a demonstration other groups which are known with their unreligious sides, they protected their table against the police.*

Both Sezi and Cengiz tell a similar story, although they also include socialists, atheists, revolutionists and leftists as primary protectors in their stories. Ceyhun was surprised over the fact that opposing groups collaborated and he puts extra focus on the collaboration between radical Muslims and people from the LGBT movement:

*It was weird because you know most of the opposing groups, the ones that oppose throughout the history, they came together at the protests and it was really weird. I mean you had radical Muslims and LGBT crowd standing side-by-side and without doing anything to each other you know, and radical Muslims can actually be really irritating about that, you know because homosexuality is a sin and so on. But it was all okay, it was just weird.*

Just as Ceyhun was surprised around the Muslim and LGBT events, Cengiz was also surprised during his observation. He tells his story with an excitement in his voice:

*... there were for example anti-capitalistic Muslims, revolutionary Muslims, which I was very surprised and the best thing was to see at the first days of protests, there were members of the Turkish Communist Party and anti-capitalist Muslims holding the same barricades against a riot vehicle. It was amazing to see.*
9.6 Other types of collaborations

A few other examples of collaboration were brought up with emphasizes on the actual action process when the police intervened. Irem remembers a certain moment that she witnessed:

*I saw a girl, she was under the water cannons attack, she was probably Kurdish, she had a PKK flag and a man who had a t-shirt with the Turkish flag came and took her hand and saved her and a member from an infamous racist-party came and helped them. That was the best memory from the demonstrations.*

Akif talks about a similar moment, however he refers to a picture from one of the police interventions that have been circulating on the Internet:

*There is a picture like one Kurdish party member running together with a secular and in the corner of that picture there is a nationalist doing the wolf thing sign against the police, this is... It’s something amazing, it’s an amazing picture, like it’s just being, like. I’m not telling it’s the way it should be but normally they should have been fighting. One is holding Abdullah Öcalan picture; one is holding Turkish flag and one nationalist guy between... And they are together for one reason, being there one man against the police violence...*

Right afterwards Akif starts talking about the nineties generation, which he sees as the new future and the hope for Turkey, since they don’t care about old feuds or problems that have been a part of Turkey’s history since many years ago:

*... But one thing I should underline, the new generation, like nineties generation, they didn’t have problems with anything, they didn’t have any problem with Abdullah Öcalan picture next to the Turkish flag, they... “It’s okay, so what?”*, and these people really don’t understand. forty years old protester makes it a huge problem, it’s impossible for him to understand Turkish flag and Abdullah Öcalan picture next to each other, but this eighteen year old is already over that, I mean “let’s go to the barricade”, I mean, wow.

So far the data on the collaboration processes presented so far have focused on moments of action, where different groups of people collaborated during violent periods. Although most of the groups were opposite of each other in terms of beliefs and values, they did not hesitate to abandon their prejudices for collaboration between each other. However, everything was not about the heat of the moment, there were also discussions between the people and groups and also general practical aids inside the occupied area that were needed. Cengiz reflects over the groups discussions:
... there were also nationalists sitting down, chatting with socialists, which in the same field, in Taksim square, nationalists shot many, many leftist about ten to twenty years ago, but in Gezi Park, they were sitting and chatting and having a good time, sometimes clashing together against the police and it was amazing... even the most opposite ones, the nationalists, the revolutionists and atheists, there were groups discussing the existence of God and other thing, which is not very common for Turkey. And the best happening was to see people speaking, interacting with each other because in Turkey there are more strict walls and I think we have destroyed some of these walls but there are still a lot of steps to take.

The more practical help was based on the things that needed to be done inside the occupied area e.g. cleaning the streets or lifting stones to the barricades. Sezi and Caner had a discussion about this:

Sezi: “Everyone wanted to help”.  
Caner: “And those fixes are that we have to clean the toilets, we have to build the tents, there is a fire that’s must be washed away, something like that”.  
Sezi: “We were like Smurfs... Yes, yes, and everyone wanted to do something so, no one needed to ask anything because everyone wanted to do something, to stay in the park and be a part of it, yes... People knew that they were there for a reason and they were so respectful”.

Sezi compared herself and the other helpers as Smurfs and Gözde made a similar comparison and also added a comparison to communists while she was laughing:

... and it was like a Smurf village you know, like a communist village and something like that, people were helping each other, and it was very peaceful and people from different ethnicities and backgrounds, they were all together.

Cengiz also confirm the willingness to help and to be a part of the movement:

... in the park we were having calls shouting ‘we are going to do this work, are there any volunteers?’, generally there were, people were very pleased to be a part of something like this.

While the respondents reflect on the collaboration processes with a mixture of surprise and joy, Barış was a little more skeptic towards the genuineness behind the different collaborations:

Different groups were acting like they made rehearsals for that, it was like a theatre show and they were like they played their acts before, they were amateurs, but it was so sweet.
9.7 Conflict group behavior

Even though the respondents mainly underline the positive aspects behind the collaboration processes between different people and groups that were involved within the Gezi Protest, some processes of a more negative character were also brought up. With negative character I now refer to how one group of people systematically oppressed another group during the Gezi Protest and the groups involved were the Kemalists and the supporters of the Turkish-Kurdish parties BDP.

9.8 The Turkish-Kurdish parties and Kemalists

Seven of the respondents brought up the issues that involved BDP and PKK - Burak, Erol, Cengiz, Barış (2), Canan, Berkin and Ceyhun - and the main focus seemed to be the Kurds’ wish for an autonomous state or general dislike of the Kurds. Burak reflects on one negative situation that involved BDP and some other protesters, and at the same time he underlines the friendliness that characterized the occupied area:

*Yes, sometimes people were arguing with each other but more especially it was BDP supporters and the rest of the groups. BDP is a Turkish-Kurdish party, they are also in parliament, but their aim is to separate Turkey in two parts, the Kurdish part and the Turkish part. And during nearly twenty years or more Turkish soldiers and Kurdish young’s have died because of this aim. They have a leader which they call Apo and he is a terrorist leader and in the Gezi Protest the BDP supporters were also there and they opened a big poster of Apo. At that time people started to yell at them ‘take down that poster’. Some people threw water bottles at them and yelled, ‘if you don’t take down we will take you out from the area’. But in general these protesters were friendly to each other. It doesn’t matter from which side they are, Turkish, Kurdish or others, they were mostly friendly to each other.*

Canan reflects on her observation regarding the PKK and other people:

*One time there was a little problem with the people who stayed in the PKK tents, the Kurdish people, supporting PKK. There was a little tension, but then it was okay... There is a parliamentarian who is close to the Kurdish party; the Kurdish party with PKK has some relations. They opened their own flags in Gezi Park, PKK flags and also the photos of Abdullah, the leader of PKK and some people wanted to get rid of those flags and the problem started for two nights... There were no problem with the Kurdish party people and supporters until they put their flags up.*

Both Burak and Canan observed that some people reacted with anger towards the people who represented the Turkish-Kurdish parties among the large masses in the
occupied area. The situation was only calm as long as BDP and PKK did not show their symbols or signs in terms of their existence in the park. Erol had a similar observation which sparked the anger of some people towards BDP’s wishes for an autonomous state:

*One time I witnessed this one, there is like a Kurdish party in Turkey, it’s like BDP and their supporters were doing some... They were trying to express what they needed; you know what they want... A separated state and the other protesters were shouting at them ‘this is not the place to show what you need and what you want to do, it’s not that place to show what you want here. We are all here because of the Gezi Park and this is not the place to show some political things, this is not an politic area’, yeah the real supporters started to be like apolitical in Gezi Park.*

The interesting thing with Erol’s observation is that people told the BDP and PKK supporters that the mobilization was a mobilization with the aim to save the Gezi Park and not an political demonstration of any kind, even if a large part of the respondents in the mobilization consisted of several of other political parties and political ideologies with their own flags, leaders and their own demands.. It is clearly a case of direct oppression of a group which was not considered to be welcome to participate and express their opinions, while other groups were allowed to use the Gezi Protest as a platform to express their wants and needs besides rescuing the park.

Cengiz laughs while he mentions arguments between Kemalists and other activists and revolutionist groups. The reason behind these arguments lies in Kemalists’ beliefs in the Turkish flag as one big representative for all participants in the movement, not organizational or political flags:

*... The second argument was between the patriots and other groups, activists, revolutionists. The Kemalists said ‘we don’t want political organizations’ flags; we just want Turkish flags to show that we are all one, this represents all of us’. The activists and revolutionists were saying that ‘this represents us’, and the same argument was; there was a slogan singing ‘we are the soldier of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ and they were making fun of them, ‘we are soldiers of Freddy Mercury’.*

Cengiz observation seems to confirm that it was the Kemlists who had those above mentioned problems with the representation of the Turkish-Kurdish parties. At the same time these problems were observed by the other Kemalists which I interviewed, but they
did not mention the Kemalists as the problem makers, just people who disagree with the Kurds and their demands.

The Gezi Protest became a venue for many different issues, such as political aims; Kurds’ political goal was not accepted among different groups of people including the Kemalists. While some of them showed their anger around the representation of Turkish-Kurdish parties, Cengiz and Berkin had other opinions. Cengiz was disappointed when he realized that there were very few Kurdish representatives in the Gezi Protest:

_The members or followers of these movements were a little bit disappointing because I mean in Turkey, Kurdish people were always suppressed and throughout the entire history of Turkish republic, thousands of people killed during the military coup in 1980 and they have always been suppressed, their language got banned, their identity got banned but it was really disappointing to see rarely Kurdish people in Gezi Park. Because they had negotiations in order to end the war between PKK and the Turkish state. That’s why they didn’t join the movement a lot._

Cengiz mentions that the negotiations between PKK and the government could be one reason behind the low participation of Kurdish representatives. Berkin expressed his own support towards the Kurds since he is a socialist and he also describes the Kemalists as the main opposition group against Kurds.

_... especially nationalist, Kemalist and socialists groups always talk to each other about Kurdish problems, because Kemalists don’t like Kurdish and socialists support the Kurdish people... the main problem was the Kurdish problem and the government started to intervene with Kurdish people and the nationalists don’t like them and hate the Kurdish, maybe they came to the streets about the government plan to intervene with Kurdish... Because they always said the PPK and AKP together, they came here for about this reason in the streets, maybe._

Both Berkin and Barış (2) are socialists; however they have different opinions when it comes to the Kurds’ demand for an autonomous state:

_The only ideological problem was that the Kurds want to split the country and they want their own country, but the group that I felt close to thought that separation is not necessary, Kurds and Turks can live together in peace. That was the only ideological difference between me and other groups and it was not really a big problem, there were peaceful arguments between us._
Akif, Ece and Caner talked during the interview about the many left-wing groups and their diversity as the main problem since they are having problems with collaborating – especially with the focus on Kurdish issues.

Akif: “Well, Turkish politics is really complicated especially in the left-wing, like”.
Ece: “The left… It has spread everywhere and because they separate in too many different kind of groups”.
Akif: “Yes, that is maybe the traditional worldwide left-wingers’ problem mainly, but in Turkey it’s more to fill and it’s somehow impossible to get them together”.
Caner: “Also there are some cultural issues, Kurdish issues, yes. So, Kurdish issues and secularism are two issues that are making it hard to bring left-wing or other wings closer”.

This conversation gives the differences between the socialists Barış (2) and Berkin. With a more clear perspective, we can now assume that they belong to two different ideological left-wing organizations.

9.9 The groups follow different paths

After the dispersal of the occupation by the police in the middle of June, the Gezi Protest continued in various parks around Istanbul. Thus, it seemed like the parks were used by particular groups or ideologists and they were not mixed as the occupied area was mixed before. The groups had left the collaboration processes with their opposite groups and now focused on their own agendas. Akif visited a lot of different parks after the occupation ended and he observed the diversity:

Well actually after sixteenth of June, after the police cleared the park, pushed the resistance from... Of course it went down and people spread to different parks and then it was more close to the traditional way of doing other things, I mean, we, I didn’t follow every park meeting, but some parks we know, but some parks was about more secular, some parks are more close to the Kurdish movement, some parks more, like elitist groups..

Berkin has noticed the same trend and he believes that a new Gezi Protest is needed to make these groups collaborate, that they need to gather around the barricades once again:
They were collaborating because after finishing the huge protests all kind of groups took back his own ideology, maybe there is some problems with collaborating with each other now after they finished the Gezi Park protests and nationalists making politics in its own privileges and socialists trying to make their own privileges and the nineties generation came back to their computers. But there is always disagreement about these groups now and always saying we need a new Gezi and if you make a barricade, the barricade make you join together. When you finished the protests and you came back to your own home they started to disagree, that was the kind of the people. Barricades join us.

9.10 Conclusion

The respondents’ observations regarding the wide representation of different people and groups from all corners of the Turkish society, seems to reflect that there are many problems within the country which needed to be highlighted. The most dominant and widely represented groups in the Gezi Protest were Kemalists, left-wing groups and the nineties generation.

As mentioned in an earlier section, it appeared to be a fear of future deprivation in direct relation to the more religious and conservative approach the current government was guiding the country into. It can be defined as a direct threat towards Turkey as a republic, which was built up through the vision of the founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a secular society where state and religion is separated. The Kemalists saw a window of opportunity through the Gezi Protest to raise their voices against the current government, which also should be one of the main reasons behind the wide representation of Kemalists at the occupied area.

The respondents highlight the positive collaboration processes between the diversity of the people and the groups, especially with a focus on the football supporter groups and the various Muslims groups. They mentioned how the different football team supporters that have been enemies for many years, and are used to fight among each other, united under one flag and worked together against the police. The radical Muslims collaborated with LGBT members alongside the barricades and anti-capitalistic Muslims were protected during their pray time by atheists, socialists, anarchists, homosexuals etc. They also mentioned that most people contributed by dividing work between each other in the occupied area.
Even though the positive processes were in focus during the interviews, the respondents also mentioned the conflicts between groups, especially the focus on the Kemalists and the Turkish-Kurdish political parties. Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar and Levin argues that dominant groups tend to outcast less powerful groups in their attempt for achieving the best outcome (e.g. power, wealth or other benefits) for their own group (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin 2004: 847). In this case with the Kurds and Kemalists, it seems as the Kemalists used their dominant position and tried to oust the Kurds from the Gezi Protest. However, none of the respondents observed any hostile acts towards the other less powerful groups. While the other opposite groups could put their own ideological and personal beliefs aside momentarily during the demonstration for the common good of the mobilization, the Kurdish issues were to deep rooted within some of the Kemalist group representatives. They believe that Turkey should stay as one secular nation which was the opposite of the Kurdish demand, who wanted their own autonomous state; there was a direct conflict of interests during the mobilization.

Except for the direct conflict of interests, I believe that the main reason for the Kemalists hostile acts lays within the dominant representation of Kemalists at the Gezi Protest. The other different groups that were represented during the demonstration were mainly minority groups. The other two majority groups, the left-wing and the nineties generations, were also in a way minority groups. The left-wing groups were separated into several different left-oriented groups; they were not a single unity as the Kemalists. The nineties generation were individuals born during the 1990s that participated, the younger generation. The only thing they had in common was their young age and not a shared value, belief or flag that represented them as a single unity.

The interesting part is that football supporter clubs have violently confronted each other for many years and that radical religious groups have their beliefs rooted deep down in their consciousness could let go of those issues when they needed to, while some Kemalists refused to do the same. Ann Marie Thomson and James L. Perry argue that the collaboration process is divided into two different traditions with political roots, the classic liberalism and civic republicanism (Thomson & Perry 2006: 20). Collaboration processes in terms of classic liberalism is related to self-interest in terms of wants and needs, where a gain or beneficial goal must be in focus for achieving collaboration. Collaboration in terms of civic republicanism is the opposite since it’s less driven by
self-interest. Instead the achievement of committing to something larger and to create a mutual understanding between the collaboration partners is in focus.

The minority groups had to collaborate for the common good, they were too small to act independently and if they decided to create conflicts with the other groups based on egoistic, ideological or personal beliefs, the efficacy of the mobilization would be compromised. Instead the minority groups emphasized a more civic republicanism way to approach the collaboration between each other, were the focus laid in succeed with the mobilization rather than focusing on the own groups’ self-interest. The Kemalists, on the other hand, had the advantage of being the most dominant group and could depend on their own representatives; i.e. they were not as fully dependent on the other minority groups for achieving their goals and that why they could focus more on their own political self-interests.

The functional collaboration process between the groups was, however, a momentary collaboration. When the actual occupation and the main demonstration came to an end and the police succeeded in dispersing the demonstrators from the occupied areas in the middle of June, the groups automatically stopped the collaboration processes and went to continue the protests on their own in different parks around Istanbul. The barricades connected people with different beliefs, ideas and ideologies and when the barricades went down, the connection between the groups went down with them.

10 No leader and not organized

Smelser underlined the importance of a leader or leader figure that could lead and organize the group mobilization. However, both previous research and the respondents confirm that there was neither a leader who lead the demonstrators, nor was the Gezi Protest a fully organized mobilization.

10.1 No leader

The respondents agreed that the Gezi Protest did not have a certain leader or a leader figure although Sezi mentions Taksim Solidarity as a potential leader figure. Sezi believes that Taksim Solidarity played an important role as a leader figure in the overall
process. However, she also mentions that there was not a leader because everybody was their own leader:

This mobilization, I can say that Taksim Solidarity was a leader, but if you need a leader it was all the people you know, there was not one person, not one group, everyone was a leader.

Berkin believes that Taksim Solidarity was the key figure behind the organization of the Gezi Protest:

Probably in Gezi Park protests Taksim Solidarity organized it because they started the protests and the first time they tried to collect signatures for the first government plan for making a shopping center in the park, they made the first things and after that a lot of people supported that and made it bigger.

Akif agrees with Sezi and Berkin on that Taksim Solidarity was an important actor regarding the organizing process; however, he did not consider the platform or any other group as potential leaders:

... there is no leader or any group trying to be the leader of it. Nobody can own and none of the group can own this process, like people won’t accept it and that's the way it is. I mean Taksim Solidarity is a different case because the Solidarity was there from the first day and tried to organize the stage and the Gezi Park, tried to coordinate what's happening, and tried to listen to what we needed what the people needed...

On the other hand, Akif played an important role in the overall process; he was one of the two representatives of Taksim Solidarity who were involved in the occupation and Gezi Protest. Taksim Solidarity created the well-known demand list from the Gezi Protest which was presented to the government and Akif was one of the representatives that went to Ankara and had a meeting with P.M. Erdoğan:

In 2012 we followed these Taksim Solidarity issues together with the chamber of architects and the chambers of urban planners, and like we had two secretaries. Mücella is one of them and I was the other one... That’s why we were there from the first time in the park and the Solidarity was there as the first and the only platform which was seeing there and that’s why I kept, put the demands together and talked first with the government representative, with the prime minister, but it doesn’t mean that Taksim Solidarity is the leader of the process. In the first days nobody had an idea about what Taksim Solidarity was, Taksim Solidarity got more popular after the meetings with the prime minister and after the arrest, but now people think and expects much things from Taksim Solidarity.
Even if the demand list was refused by the government authorities, groups in general saw Taksim Solidarity as a leader or a front group in the Gezi Protest and they started to put pressure on them regarding their own demands and questions. Caner and Akif discusses about this:

Caner: “‘They didn’t bring up this and that; they didn’t say something about this and that, something like that’.

Akif: “But in this nature it’s just a platform and just should tell things about Taksim related problems, but people don’t understand, people think that it’s a political something and should tell everything to about anything”.

Cengiz emphasizes that the groups controlled themselves and he also confirm the discussion between Caner and Akif. According to Cengiz some people did not care much of Taksim Solidarity and their way of handling the issues around the Gezi Protest, which lead to the creation of an alternative council:

There were leaders of political organizations, but they controlled themselves and there were initiatives of a council of all political organizations and there were Taksim solidarity, about 130 people, also probably in the tenth of July there were an independent council, people who didn’t involve in political parties or Taksim solidarity, they didn’t like what they were doing, but it lasted about three or four days because the police interfered in the Gezi Park.

The overall belief among the respondents was that the movement did not have any leader or leader figure, even though Taksim Solidarity played an important part in the overall process.

10.2 Not organized

A smaller part of the respondents believe that the Gezi Protest were organized, a larger part did not. There is diversity around this question. Hilal believes that the Gezi Protest were organized since there was a sort of control over the situation during the whole process, things never got out of hand:

Yes, definitely. Because you know you have to be organized if you want to bring so many people together and keep them in control... and you needed to get organized because otherwise it would be out of control and it would be worse than it was, you need to be organized... I felt that people had open ears and
everyone was aware of everything, they were ready if the police would come and attack, they protected themselves, they kept everything down and people were... And between the groups, people were informing themselves.

On the other hand, Sezi believes that the situation was opposite, it was not controlled:

... What happened was a real civil movement you know, organized so fast and without control because we couldn’t... someone told me that a million people was in the park, trying to go to the park and we couldn’t organize it.

Akif also believes that the large group of mobilization was unorganized since no one expected such a huge mobilization:

Well I don’t think this whole process was organized, that’s my opinion. Because it was something one hundred percent unexpected, no one was really, no one was expecting such a social wave.

Even though her personal opinion leans towards no, Ece stands in between regarding the question if it was organized or not:

Somehow we can say yes, but on the other hand we can say no because there is no one at the top of this organization. I mean people just went to the park according to their opinion. I mean no one told them ‘hey, you should go there, you should stay there and you should demonstrate with these guys’, no one was saying that and... It’s complicated and directives are given...They just wanted to be there after work, we are also having fun still, what we have done during these times, we are just looking like Clark Kent, I mean until six o’clock we were working and then after the working hour we were going there just like supermen.

10.3 Conclusion

According to the respondents, the Gezi Protest was not organized. Yet, if we use the concepts of organization by Göran Ahrne and Nils Brunsson it seems to be a mixture of partial organization and network (Ahrne & Nilsson, 2011). To be considered as complete organization, certain elements must be presented by decisions, such as: membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring and sanctions (Ahrne & Nilsson 2001: 4). Partial organization contains one or several of these elements, but not all. Network on the other hand is defined as:
.. a network consists of informal structures of relationships linking social actors, which may be persons, teams or organizations... Relationships in networks are non-hierarchical, and a network is maintained through reciprocity, trust and social capital a genuine network arises spontaneously... And network are expanded through people meeting in various contexts and getting to know one another (Ahrne & Nilsson 2011: 6 & 8).

Did the Gezi Protest consist of any of the above mentioned elements? Since the mobilization was open for everybody who wanted to engage, membership was not needed. Was the Gezi Protest build upon a hierarchy system? Both yes and no. Officially, there was no person or group who were in charge of the protest, yet Taksim Solidarity had a powerful position and people in general respected them. Taksim Solidarity took important decisions, they wrote the demand list for the government and they had an official meeting with the government regarding the situation at the Gezi Protest. Another type of hierarchy was the situation between the Kemalists and the Kurds. Some of the Kemalists took a dominant position towards the Kurds, which were not considered to be counted as equals during the protests. Were there any rules? Officially no, yet there were some ethical codes or unwritten rules. People in general considered the mobilization as a peaceful one and they wanted to keep it peaceful towards the outside sphere (e.g. media or other nations), if demonstrators used violence they broke the unwritten rule. As Hilal mentioned, if people used violence, they were taken back by the other demonstrators so they could calm down, and Berkin ended up in arguments with other demonstrators who told him not to use violence. There were probably other ethical codes or unwritten rules of common sense, such as: no violence between protesters, no unnecessary vandalism, keep the area clean etc. Was there any monitoring? Partly yes, protesters used Twitter and Facebook as news sources and to spread information about different issues, such as: the police whereabouts, the best way to go to avoid the police, were to bring the injured people etc. The soldiers next to the barricades in the front did also work as monitors since they monitored the police and their moves. If the police were coming, the soldiers were probably the first to know and the first to warn the other demonstrators. Were there any sanctions? Not any official, yet some Kemalists actions towards the Kurds might be considered as a kind of sanction.

As Ahrne and Nilsson defines network, there are similar features since it was a spontaneous and informal gathering of different social actors, from both civil society and several of organizations and as people engaged between each other the mobilization
grow. Even if there were some kind semi-structured hierarchical system, it was not a mobilization built up on a hierarchy system. And accept for the incidents between some Kemalists and the Kurds or between the soldiers and the peaceful protesters, the mobilization in general was built up on reciprocity, social capital and trust between the different actors.

So was the Gezi Protest organized? Both yes and no. The mobilization had several of the elements which define it as partly organized, and yet it was not. If we continue to define the full organizing part according to Ahrne and Nilsson’s concept, we still lack the elements of membership and the other elements cannot either be considered as complete elements, only partly.

There are also two other reasons behind the lack of organization and the first one is related to the element of hierarchy. The overall Gezi Protest had no guidance from a leader nor a leader figure, people and groups went to the occupied area and interacted with other people and groups. It was a mixture of people and problems that could not be controlled by one leader or a leader figure. The second reason was related to the lack of membership. Since the mobilization was open for everybody who wanted to get involved, the people and organizations which took part of the Gezi Protest grow in a rate which could not be controlled. Within a few days the occupation of fifty people had grown to a mass group mobilization with hundreds of thousands of people. It was impossible to keep the actual event organized.

As mentioned, Taksim Solidarity was considered closest to a leader figure by the demonstrators since they were one of the main initiators of the early occupation of the Gezi Park and Taksim Solidarity also knew that they had an important position within the mobilization. They did not, however, claim the role as a leader nor as a group which were above the others on a hierarchy ladder. When the Gezi Protest started, Taksim Solidarity took the lead and created the Gezi Protest demand list, which were based on decisions made by all the people who were engaged in the open platform, later representatives from Taksim Solidarity went to Ankara as the representatives for the Gezi Protest and had a meeting with the government regarding the demands. This might be considered to be similar to what Ahrne and Nilsson refers to as a visible decision-
making order, where everyone involved had a chance to speak and participate in the decision making (Ahrne & Nilsson 2011: 16).

Even if Taksim Solidarity was a platform which primarily focused on problems and issues that were related to the Gezi Protest, some people and groups believed that Taksim Solidarity were in charge of their problems and issues. As a result of Taksim Solidarity’s priorities to treat only Taksim related problems, these people and groups finally created their own independent council, which they discussed the problems and issues which they believed that Taksim Solidarity neglected. Ahrne and Nilsson refer to this act as when certain actor are dissatisfied towards the current organization and decision making, and decides to create their own meta-organization, where the dissatisfied actors can meet their own requirements and satisfy their own needs (Ahrne & Nilsson 2011: 13).

Since it was impossible for this occupation and demonstration to have a leader, it would also be impossible to keep the mobilization fully organized. The active groups had their own leaders or management and organizing; they were not dependent on other leaders. And if people wanted a specific leader regarding their problems or issues, they formed their own groups or councils and got organized. If there would have been a certain group or person that took the role as the leader of the Gezi Protest, it would have created more complicated situations, and certainly more conflicts between people and groups than the data presented. By this I am referring to the diversity of problems which different groups and people represented at the Gezi Protest. One group or person can’t take in all those problems and represent the Gezi Protest as one single unit. One example of a problem related to this is the political diversity between the Kemalists and the Kurds. Could one person or group represent both of those opposite groups with their wants and their needs. No, that would have been impossible according to the respondents’ observations.

The results from the data goes against Smelser’s fifth step, mobilization of participants for action, since Smelser underlines the importance of a leader or leader figure in charge for the mobilization in order to proceed to the next step. Demonstrators gathered at the Gezi Protest because of their own agendas and it was open for all participants. The Gezi Protest was a network with partial organization elements and no leader.
11 The respondents’ demands and achievements

We have concluded that the Gezi Protest did not have one common goal or a task. It started out as an environmental protest and occupation and soon afterwards it developed into a mass mobilization where the participants had their own problems and issues that they wanted to proclaim, and they used the Gezi Protest as a platform to announce their demands. Some people did not even have a special reason for joining; they just went there to support the large masses and to be a part of the solidarity. Among the respondents who were interviewed there was one aim that more than half of them had in common – the demand for the government to resign, which did not happen.

11.1 Demands

Some of the respondents who wanted a change of government seemed to have this as a clear aim when they joined the demonstrations; other developed this belief during the Gezi Protest. As mentioned earlier, Canan wanted the government to resign because it would be beneficial for her in terms of her job and the soldiers Barış(2), Cengiz and Berkin also wanted a governmental change. Furthermore, Barış (2) also hoped for a socialist revolution:

First, in my heart I had a hope for a socialist revolution, but if you look on it rationally, my hope was to bring down the government.

Barış (2) realized that a socialist revolution was not possible. Apart from that, he believed that they could have forced the government to resign. Berkin also had hopes for a communist society, although he believed that the more rational way to achieve those goals was through a window of opportunity, the republican values. The republicans were the party that was strong enough to take the AKP government down and the socialist values would be applied within the society afterwards:

I participated in these protests and I’ve always been in the streets because I believe in some socialist values... we have to create a society without borders, without classes, without money. I support this value. I participated because of these reasons and to reach this value is very far right now, because we have to keep the republicans values firstly, because AKP’s hates the republicans and their values, like secularism and that the girls and the men comes together in society without marriage... They hate everything about the republicans, first we have to keep the republicans value here and maybe after that we can try to apply some socialist values, but we have to keep the republic first.
Cengiz’s first hope was to bring down the government. Afterwards he realized that these demands, including a social revolution, were naïve:

At the first days you were really confused, you weren’t really expecting something like this from Turkey because the people who were protesting was always protesting, it was all the same people. We have ever seen a riot like this, a revolt like this since the seventies in turkey...we were pretty much shocked, we didn’t know if the government might have fallen or if they would approve with our demands. Some people thought that there would be a revolution, a socialist revolution. But I thought those were naïve, I wasn’t sure because it was too quick. The first time I thought that we could take down the government and then I thought it was a bit naïve, maybe we can show ourselves and that we are not silent against your operation and against your violence.

Instead of bringing down the government, Cengiz realized that they could put pressure on them by showing the government that opposition exists. Ceyhun describes a similar scenario:

Actually, our first aim was to the government to resign, but after two days we understood that they would never do that and then it just turned into a passive resistance you know. It was just for saying that ‘we know what you’re doing, we know what you actually are up to and we just won’t let you do that’, that was basically it.

Caner hoped that this demonstration was the beginning of something new, something that would last, political or not, something that he could tell the next generations:

I can add that I don’t want those days to be talked as just ‘the good old days’, I somehow want it to morph and transform into something different, political or not, just something different... I want to be able to tell our children thirty years from now, I want to tell the following events of it.

11.2 The disappointments

As I am writing this section almost ten months later, the demonstrators were able to save the park, although they did not succeed with the resignation of the government or other political changes. There was no socialist revolution and P.M. Erdoğan is still in office. Some of the respondents express a kind of disappointment after the first major demonstration was over; they had hopes for something more, something different.
Even though Gözde believes that it was a warning for the government, she still expresses a kind of disappointment; she believed that more could be achieved if more people protested:

*I feel that more could have done, I feel that people could have protested more, but anyway, we rescued the park and I feel like that we gave a signal to the government that they should be more careful and care more about the people... like there should be more democracy and they should be ready to hear different voices. I feel like we gave them a warning.*

On the other hand, Zeynep believes that the protests made people more aware of the ongoing situation. She also feels that people gave up too early:

*I think that people are more aware, but some part of the protesters just went back to their regular life, like nothing happened and this is very sad I think, because I think it should have continued more.*

Ece also had high hopes for the possibility that the government would resign:

*I mean the government hasn’t resigned yet, or maybe I am expecting too much, but after this kind of demonstration...*

Canan is glad that they saved the park, however she had hopes for greater changes: “The park is still standing, but I thought that it would be much more”.

### 11.3 The achievements

The respondents did not succeed with their main hope; that the government would resign. However, the respondents emphasize other achievements. Some of them were related to the current government, thus the respondents’ lifts up the changes within people’s minds as the main success.

Both Zeynep and Irem touch on how the Gezi Protest scared the government and P.M. Erdoğan. Zeynep reflects:

*Yeah, from the government it was good for me to see that they were afraid, because they got scared and it was very visible and notable, because it was the first time for them to see this kind of gathering and protest.*
Barış (2) mentions how they made P.M. Erdoğan aware of the opposition, how Gezi Protest helped to prevent a war with Syria and showed that the government can’t control the social media and the struggle will continue after the Gezi Protest:

Erdoğan is aware now that his not unbeatable anymore, we stopped the intervention to Syria when there was a possible war between us. Even if he had the police, even if he had the media with him, he understood that he couldn’t control social media. He saw many times that people aren’t afraid of him. Seven people passed away, people lost their eyes, but none of them lost their pride. That’s why this fight doesn’t end.

Berkin underline how AKP lost their face towards the European countries during the Gezi Protest and that they took a “big wound”. Berkin also brings up how this event made people more politically aware:

Probably we hit AKP really hard, they lost theirs imagine for the outside and the European people says that AKP have no democratizations in Turkey, they believe that after the Gezi the European opinion believe that the AKP is not a democratic party, it’s like Al-Qaida supporters. The main success is a perception of the AKP from the outside of Turkey, because they present themselves, the AKP, as they are democratization party... I believe that we smashed the AKP and they took a big wound.... it started with us and the people will learn how to make politics... but everybody have become political after the Gezi, the people who were apolitical are now involved in politics and thinking politically about things.

Erol mentions how the people have learned to stand up for themselves:

People have started to say what they want, that they can protest for something and that can change something by protesting. They can announce what they want to do to the country and to the world as well, and by protesting against the government and by doing something at least.

Akif share a similar opinion:

Well people are braver and people care more than before. I mean, they learned that they have to care about things and give reactions; I think there are more achievements like this.

Canan highlights how the Gezi Protest gave the people more self-confidence:

In terms of people of course it was very positive because people became more self-confident and they were behind their ideas, they were not afraid to ask for their demands
Burak believes that the people have started to question more about the political situation:

There are some good changes also. For example, people who weren’t talking about any politics or some bad news about the country started to talk and question on what was going on. ‘What is our government doing?’ People were starting to ask themselves and asked there people what was going on. They became more curious about what the government was doing with the law changes and I think that the government took some lessons from these actions because they changed their reactions over these situations, but not in a good way, not in a good manner.

Hilal believes that the people now interact more and started listening to each other:

You know the communications within the groups are better; they started to communicate with each other, that protect Turkey to be, to live in a parallel society again. If people are starting to listen to each other you could minimalize the hate or other negative things in this country and that I believe is the biggest achievement which was forced by the Gezi Park.

Yücel follows Hilal’s thoughts and emphasize that people with different ideas learned how to interact with each other and discuss more about the problems in Turkey after the Gezi Protest:

It was a practice for our generation. There were battlefields before with low participation, but now people saw that different ideas can come together... after people started to talk about the country problems, like loudly. Before people hesitated to even speak about this, as a reaction to violence, people’s eyes were open.

Ceyhun also highlights how different parts of the society have learned to collaborate for a common cause:

We achieve that we actually saw that different parts of society can get together for a common cause and actually pursue that without getting on each other throats. So I think it was more like a social enlighten.

Cengiz believes that the consciousness of the people has changed for the better and Gezi Park proved that people with different opinions can live together in peace:

We have as a society, consciousness of society, we had a very important step, a small step but I think it’s the most important because most people, even some social democrats, thought that going out to protest is something a traitor or a terrorist would do, that consciousness have changed and I thinks it’s the most
important aspect that changed after the Gezi Park protests and also we have seen that we can live peacefully in an autonomous commune.

Barış highlights how the general attitude from western people, the white Turks, towards the Kurds in the eastern part of Turkey has improved:

And one of the best results is that Western people, the white Turks, saw the problems of Eastern people. The white Turks started making empathy of the Kurdish people, during the revolution people started to make demonstrations for Kurdish people’s problems and they started to say, even the racist people started to say, ‘oh, we watched the same problems of East from the same media, so maybe Kurdish people were really right, we should look from another side’, they said.

11.4 It’s not over...

Zeynep was disappointed that the mobilization and the Gezi Protest had come to an end, however, Akif, Caner and Berkin believe that it’s still ongoing, it’s just not in the form of a large mass mobilization. Akif explains how the Gezi Protest exists today in the matter of a more symbolic protest:

Well, this feeling goes in a different way, like painting the letters. Some individuals painted the ladders in Istanbul in the colors of the rainbow and the day after the Municipality came and painted it back to grey and the day after in the whole country, everyone, all the ladders, people painted them in the colors of rainbow. It’s a different way of telling something. This week they found four and half million dollars in cash in a shoebox and yesterday people were bringing these empty shoeboxes in front of the bank were they found the shoebox. I mean, the feeling is still alive but, I mean, were not professional protesters, we have our jobs to do and we are busy with it, that’s the, our main criticize to Europeans like you who tries to understand what’s going on here. Like the first news agent came here ‘is there any resistance right now in Istanbul? Can you take me there?’ it’s not something like that.

Caner agrees: “It’s not a hobby time that have passed, we keep it alive”.

As mentioned in the presentation, Berkin was working on a huge mural in grey shades, which highlighted different important moments of the Gezi protest in colors when we met. For Berkin it’s important to keep the struggle alive after the actual protests and the usage of visual messages is one of his many tactics:
After they finished the protests, I took the role as organizer. I have made posters, writing on social media and I’m making stencils. I’m like a visual supporter for the protest after the protest. I’m always here (at Don Quixote), I’ve always been here for taking roles in Gezi Protest, both visually and morally.

11.5 Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, saving the park was the primary target with the early occupation and protests. As the Gezi Protest grows in participants, other sub-targets were added, yet saving the park was still on the main agenda. Per Dannefjord argues how organizations use sub-targets as important means to achieve success in the organizations primary target and this is where the organization aim its resources and main focus (Dannefjord 2009: 296-97). All respondents underlined the importance of saving the park during the interviews, not only the respondents from Taksim Solidarity. In order to save the park and to achieve other sub-targets, a success in governmental change was considered to be the most important sub-target among the respondents and they aimed most of their attention towards that specific goal, which developed it into a primary target instead. However, if the demand for the government to resign became one of the primary targets, it was then important for success in that specific target in order to achieve success in the other sub-targets by the participants, e.g. stopping the police violence or a social revolution.

Even if governmental change was not the primary target among the respondents as a reason to enter the Gezi Protest, many of them adopted this wish both during and after the Gezi Protest ended. Of course, many participants were against the government and wanted them to resign because they had their own political agenda, e.g. the socialists, Kemalists or the nationalists. However, the general-belief among the respondents was rooted in several reasons regarding how the government decided to handle the Gezi Protest situation. Through analyzing the data, I have discovered six main reasons which were non-political:

1. The government refused to save the park.
2. The government decision to use extreme police violence as a method for dispersing the occupiers and demonstrators and continued to do so for two weeks.
3. How the government ordered the police to arrest the people who participated in the Gezi Protest, nonviolent or not.
4. The decision to censor the mainstream media during the early violent clashes between the police and demonstrators instead of showing the people what was really going on.
5. How the government ignored and refused listening to the demonstrators and their demands (referring to the demand list created by Taksim Solidarity).
6. How P.M. Erdoğan accused the Gezi Protesters for being marauders, terrorists and provocateurs in a national speech instead of entering into dialog with them.

These are six reasons which I have been able to detect through my interviews; of course there are probably other reasons which were not mentioned by the respondents.

After the Gezi protest ended, the demand for a governmental change was not achieved. In fact, the park was not officially saved until about six months later and no other political changes were in motion. Some of the respondents expressed their disappointment after the occupation and main demonstration was over, they hoped something more or different and they believed that more people should have participated or that people gave up too soon.

However, because of the diversity among people and groups with demands or problems, which voices would have been selected to be heard by the government? Not everybody was able to get a piece of the cake, if we don’t consider a governmental resign or the saving of Gezi Park as the only cakes. Yet, if the government would have resigned, the park might have been saved faster, but another problem would occur; which political party would be suitable to represent the diversity among the demonstrators? Berkin was a socialist and he believed that the best way to approach a governmental change was through the AKPs opposition party, the Kemalist CHP, not a smaller socialist party. The Kemalist would have agreed, however, would the other socialists groups agree on this? And would the Kurds agree? They would rather have seen BDP or PKK as winners. The point of departure is that even if the government would have resigned, Turkey would have new problems to face, problems which could spark new tensions between the different political groups in Turkey, especially since the Kurdish political parties have been fighting for their own autonomous region for many years. The political groups and demonstrators with a certain political view who wanted the government to resign did
not see the big picture or the future obstacles since they acted in a short-term rationalization due to the common-belief. Get rid of the government, and then?

Even though the demonstrators did not achieve structural changes, the resignation of neither the government nor a social revolution, they agree on a success regarding the overall mental changes among the people in Turkey and that the government now was more aware of the power that people have when they act together in a large group. The respondents underlined how people now were more aware of problems in the country and that they had become more politically engaged. They believed that people now were more open-minded towards other ideas and ideologies; they believed that the population in Turkey had more self-confidence now and they learned how to stand up for what they believed in.

These mental changes are the primary engines for the continued protests around the country that still exist after the police dispersed the occupiers and demonstrators and ended the physical version of the Gezi Protest, perhaps not in the form of large group mobilizations, rather in symbolic acts like painting staircases around the Turkish cities, placing empty shoeboxes outside corrupted banks, the continued use of social media, creating stencils with messages that gets spray-painted on walls around cites etc.

12 Summary

This thesis have is roots in the field of group mobilization with focus on the Gezi Protest that occurred in Turkey in the early summer of 2013. The thesis focus lay within the overall processes which characterized the Gezi Protest: where there any other reasons accept for saving the park behind the large gathering? How did the collaboration process between the participants look like? Did the group mobilization achieve a common goal or task? Where there any leader figures behind the mobilization? How did the organizational part look like? These were general questions that I founded interesting and wanted more information about. Through theories that concerned mobilization processes, group behavior and relative deprivation I created a semi structured interview guide that were my model for collecting the data I needed according to my purpose.
The next step was to find relative samplings and I narrowed it down to actual participants at the Gezi Protest in Istanbul. The majority of the respondents were contacted through the snowball method, which was the easiest way to get in contact with respondents that were interested in the project. I did however put out several ads about my thesis project on Gezi Protest related websites, yet only one person replied. I also got in contact with one respondent through a visit in Istanbul’s first occupied house.

The collected data showed several of features which characterized the Gezi protest: the use of social media, the mixture of agendas behind the participation, the diversity among the participants and how they acted during the protest, the absence of a leader, how it was organized and the interaction between different groups.

The government censured the mainstream media during the early stages of the Gezi Protest, which generated a wide usage of social media like Facebook and Twitter among the participants. The social media played an important part in the Gezi Protest since it was used by the participants to spread information, news, get organized and also recruiting people to the protest.

To save the Gezi Park was the primary target from the very beginning. However, as the demonstration grows, the different reasons for joining grow with it. Some people were angry towards the government, other at the police; others went there without any specific reason since their aim was to be a part of the solidarity and show that they supported the occupation. Even if my data targeted three reasons, beside the actual rescue of the park, yet it could have been ten other reasons, perhaps a hundred. The Gezi Protest were not a protest with one or three type of common goals, it was a demonstration that targeted any problem a participator had and wanted to share, it became a platform for announcing and sharing different problems.

The Gezi Protesters were not one type of protesters, there were three main categories of protesters that I discovered through the data: the supporters, the nonviolent protesters and the soldiers. All three categories played different parts and roles during the Gezi Protest. The supporters were not the physical demonstrator, they were the people that supported the demonstration through material and human resources, morally and gave
them shelter when they needed to. The nonviolent protesters were the category which became to symbolize the Gezi Protest. They were the majority of participants and they used nonviolent resistance as methods toward the more violent police. The soldiers were the protectors of the Gezi Protest; they used violence against the police in their attempts to keep them on a distance, to protect the other demonstrators from the police attacks or self-defense. The soldiers were crucial in terms of keeping the occupied area around the Gezi Park and Taksim Square in motion during those three weeks. Without the protection from the soldiers, the police would have dispersed the occupiers and demonstrators earlier.

The Gezi Protest was characterized by its multifaceted variety of people and groups that participated. The mobilization was not a gathering of one single homogeneity group. People and groups from all corners of society were gathered regarding age, gender, educational level, sexual orientations, political opinions, religious or non-religious etc. The data showed an overall positive collaboration processes between these many fractions, with some exceptions regarding some representatives from the Kemalists group towards the Turkish-Kurdish political representatives. Based on the collected data my theory around this event laid in the large representation of respondents that had their root in the larger Kemalist group comparing to the other minority groups at the Gezi Protest. The Kemalists could claim a dominant position and thus act more independent and decide which groups or people they wanted to collaborate with, while the other minority groups depended on collaboration between each other for achieving the common-goals.

As mentioned, the first primary target or common-belief among the participants at the Gezi Protest was to save the Gezi Park. The data also showed that the Gezi Protest were a gathering for people with various types of problems, many of them related in one way or another towards the current government in Turkey. During the Gezi Protest, one of the early sub-targets to achieve the primary target (saving the park) became a second primary target, the resignation of the government in Turkey. Besides opposition groups’ political motivations, I concluded that this was a reaction towards the governments’ decisions in how they handled the Gezi Protest as a problem. There were mainly six reasons that I could discover: the governments refuse to save the park, the extensive use of violence by the police, the arrestments without reasons, the censure of
the mainstream media, the governmental refuse to listen to the demonstrators and the P.M. Erdoğan’s decision to insult the demonstrators by calling them names like marauders and terrorists.

About six months after the Gezi Protest ended, the park was saved. However, the government did not resign. The respondents did, however, agree on that they had succeeded in changing the metal state among the Turkish citizens in a positive way when it came to: self-confidence, more awareness and open minds. The data also showed that the protests still continues today in the form of symbolic acts, social media and street art, which I believe is a product of the mental achievements which the Gezi Protest contributed with.

13 Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction section, this thesis was from the early stage meant to focus on the rational choice in participating in a nonviolent demonstration which was confronted with extensive violence from the police. During my interviews it changed, I started to see other interesting patterns that I wanted to follow up instead, like the broad use of social media, the roles of the soldiers and supporters, the diversity of people and groups and both their functional collaboration processes and the arguments between them, the reasons for participating and the later development of their demands etc. The Gezi Protest itself was an interesting process which deserved attention.

I believe that I fulfilled the purpose with this thesis. Through my interviews I discovered several different processes operating in the group collaborations and conflicts, the different types of demonstrators/protesters that were involved, the importance of social media to organize and spread news, how the Gezi Protest functioned without a specific leader, the underlying deprivations and how the demonstration formed a second primary target regarding the wish for the government to resign. Yet there are two things missing regarding this thesis, which would have given a more describing and honest picture over the overall situation at the Gezi Protest. The first one is regarding a seventh theme, which I did not have any room to include in this thesis, however, yet an important theme: the violent methods the police adapted towards the demonstrators. The second thing which is missing is interviews with more
representatives from different groups who were active during the Gezi Protest, e.g. the Kurds, football supporters or anti-capitalistic Muslims. A lot of the information I gathered comes from participants who observed certain events, they were not taking part in everything. If I would have had the chance to interview members of different groups, I could have got firsthand information about the different events which were observed by the others.

The Gezi Protest were the largest mass group mobilization in Turkey sense thirty years back, maybe even the largest social movement among the Turkish people in modern history. The respondents believed that the greatest results from the Gezi Protest were a more widespread consciousness, an increased openness and a new found self-confidence among the people in Turkey. This might be true because the day after I ended my last interviews in Istanbul, which was in the middle of December, another mass mobilization took place in Kadıköy, Istanbul and since then several large demonstrations have been taken place there and in other large cities across Turkey. The escalation behind the new mass mobilizations was anchored in a corruption scandal which involved the current government – the AKP party. As a result the police have arrested one minister for corruption, and several family members and associates of other ministers, confiscated about 17 million dollars and three ministers have resigned from their posts. One of them, Erdoğan Bayraktar accused P.M. Erdoğan for being involved with the corruption before he left his position. While these scandals were revealed, a kind of power-war started between the former political allies, P.M. Erdoğan and Fetullah Gülen, a leader for a religious movement who lives in exile in the United States. Other scandals have also been revealed like a recorded telephone conversation between P.M. Erdoğan and his son Bilal were he asks him to smuggle away a large sum of money. Another meeting conversation between important military officials and intelligence staff were recorded and leaked out on Youtube. During the meeting they discussed different tactics in how to get involved with the war in Syria. The leakages of telephone conversations and meetings have caused the banning of both Twitter and Youtube and rumors talks about that Facebook will be next. Barış (2) made a statement were he believed that the government could not control social media, perhaps he was wrong. The 13th of May there was a terrible mining accident in Soma which caused close to 300 deaths and afterwards there were violent confrontations between
demonstrators and police, people held the government responsible for the poor conditions and lack of safety the workers were exposed to.

Things are happening in Turkey and I believe that the Gezi Protest were just the beginning of something much larger which will escalate, I am quite sure that we will see more mass mobilization like the Gezi Protest in a nearby future. That is why I recommend other researcher and students in different fields within the social science department to follow Turkey’s future political development.
14 References

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